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Folk Art & Culture

VISIT…

Azadi ka Amrit Mahotsav

The Prime Minister, Shri Narendra Modi flagged off the 'Padyatra' (Freedom March) from Sabarmati Ashram, Ahmedabad and inaugurated the curtain raiser activities of the 'Azadi Ka Amrit Mahotsav' (India@75) on March 12th, 2021. The Governor of Gujarat Shri Acharya Devvrat, Union MoS (I/C) (Culture and Tourism) Shri Prahalad Singh Patel and Chief Minister of Gujarat Shri Vijay Rupani and Gandhi Ashram trustees were among those present on the occasion.

Addressing the gathering at the Sabarmati Ashram, Shri Modi stated that the launch of the 'Azadi ka Amrit Mahotsav' 75 weeks before 15th August 2022 will continue till 15th August, 2023. He paid homage to Mahatma Gandhi and great personalities who laid down their lives in the freedom struggle. He reiterated five pillars i.e. Freedom Struggle, Ideas at 75, Achievements at 75, Actions at 75 and Resolves at 75 as guiding force for moving forward keeping dreams and duties as inspiration. He asserted that Azadi ka Amrit Mahotsav means elixir of energy of independence. It means elixir of inspirations of the warriors of freedom struggle; elixir of new ideas and pledges and nectar of AatmaNirbhar.

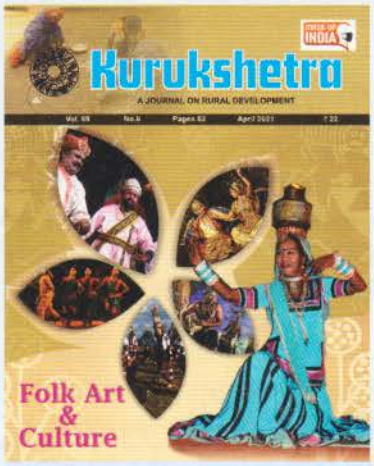
Speaking on this occasion, the Union Minister of State (Independent Charge) for Culture and Tourism Shri Prahlad Singh Patel said, after 91 years, we are all now on the same soil from where Gandhiji started the Dandi March. But it is a completely transformed India now. Recalling the words of the Prime Minister, Shri Prahalad Singh Patel said that the journey of India will now be defined by self-reliance and self-respect. The Prime Minister envisions that when the country celebrates the centenary (100th year) of Independence, then our achievements and cultural glory should be an outshining example before the world. Shri Prahlad Singh Patel also stated that Azadi ka Amrit Mahotsav shall be a Jan Mahotsav and the programs will be organized as per the interest of the general public. In fact, these programs will be organized by the citizens themselves.

The Prime Minister launched the website of India@75 on the occasion. He also launched the 'AatmaNirbhar Incubator' programme of Ministry of Culture in partnership with Sabarmati Ashram Preservation and Memorial Trust to preserve the skills and arts of artisans/crafts persons on the verge of extinction.

A short film on 'Azadi ka Amrit Mahotsav' was screened on the occasion and Dandi Yatra Geet was also performed. The occasion was marked by colourful and inspiring cultural performances in the spirit of Ek Bharat Shreshtha Bharat representing cultural variety and diversity from across the country. The performances ranged from those based on patriotic song penned by famous Tamil poet Subramania Bharti to Vande Mataram by Bankim Chandra Chatterjee to beautiful cultural item from Kashmir among others.

Azadi Ka Amrit Mahotsav is a series of events to be organised by the Government of India to commemorate the 75th Anniversary of India's Independence. The Mahotsav will be celebrated as a Jan-Utsav in the spirit of Jan-Bhagidari throughout the length and breadth of the country.

(Source: Press Information Bureau)



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Kurukshetra seeks to carry the message of Rural Development to all people. It serves as a forum for free, frank and serious discussion on the problems of Rural Development with special focus on Rural Uplift.

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EDITORIAL

India enjoys the honour globally with its distinct feature of its rich culture and heritage through folk arts, theatre, music, dance, art and crafts. Indian culture encompasses values, beliefs, traditions, rituals of the people and represents plurality of cultures & diversity based on the varied values and beliefs. When we travel across India, a myriad of cultural expressions can be experienced making us feel proud about our rich culture.

Folk art is deep rooted in our culture and continued to be a living tradition. Different forms of folk art famous across the globe includes Madhubani, Pattachitra, Warli Paintings etc. Warli painting is the tribal painting that reflects the beliefs & tradition of the Warli Tribes of Maharashtra. This painting depicts their life and rich culture and includes activities like hunting, fishing, farming, rituals, dress, and animals. The new creativity seen in warli art may be best endorsed in the pursuit of entrepreneurial development among these people.

The performing arts carry the legacy of intangible cultural heritage which not only include traditions but also living expressions in the form of diverse performing arts like oral traditions, song, dance, and drama. The dance forms like Bihu, Chhau, Kalbelia sensitises and reminds us about the deep-rooted soulfulness of indigenous human expressions. Further, the Bhartnatyam, Kathakali, Kathak, Manipuri, Odissi, Kuchipudi, Sattariya, Mohiniattam have been recognised as classical dances of India. In music, while the Hindustani and Carnatic classical music divisions are prominent, the traditional, ritual, regional, folk music, dance, and drama have always added elegant-fragrance to the cultural life of Indians.

The North-Eastern Region of India bears testimony of colourful and traditional heritage which treasures the rich history of culture, folklore arts and crafts. The Seven States are home to over 160 major Scheduled Tribes and over 400 other tribal and sub-tribal communities and groups each having its own distinct and unique cultural traditions.

The folk media are the arts which are being transmitting values, thoughts, norms, beliefs and experiences of people through various forms, which play a significant role in nation-building process of depicting the realistic lifestyle and cultures of Indians. The traditional folk media is not just confined to dance and music, but also includes art and crafts also. The attractiveness of folk media draws its strengths from endless treasures of vivid forms, local aesthetics and meaningful themes, age-old traditional stories and mythology apart from providing entertainment in local dialects and having aesthetic-cultural affinity. India has been promoting Indian folk art and culture by combining folk media with mass media & social media channels.

The 'Ruritage' programme, promoted by UNESCO aims to create innovative, rural regeneration-based models for cultural and natural heritage. Similar programme may be launched for India, bringing the role of culture as the fourth pillar of sustainable development and to contribute to socially inclusive economic growth and environmental sustainability in rural areas.

Nurturing India's Rich Cultural Heritage

Avinash Mishra and Sharmistha Sinha

Heritage is just not the brick and mortar, but the culture and people who live around it every day. There is history related to the place, culture, way of life, artisanship and economy developed based on the structure. They are not just reflectors of the past, but opportunities to generate employment and income in the present and future through heritage tourism. All heritage sites should develop special programmes for engaging school students' visits with a round the year calendar for children's workshops, activities and events. Special Heritage walks to enhance visitor experience with proper interpretation and storytelling on site or specialised interpretation centre needs to be implemented.

India with its glorious past has bequeathed a remarkable variety of monuments and sites spread all across the length and breadth of the country. It is estimated that there are more than 5 lakh historic buildings and sites that constitute the built heritage. These include protected monuments under Archaeological Survey of India and various state departments of archaeology and various other types of built heritage, viz., historic landscapes, industrial heritage, cultural landscapes, routes, underwater archaeology, step wells, mixed sites, etc. There are 38 UNESCO World Heritage Sites in India (as of 2021), of which 30 are cultural sites, seven are natural sites and one mixed site. Along with these are rich and varied intangible cultural heritage of the country like oral traditions and expressions, craftsmanship etc. Many of these cultural heritages are protected, located in urban or semi urban areas and visited by many. However, there are many which are in rural India, maybe in a remote corner in a tribal pocket and lying unidentified, unprotected and untapped.

Heritage is just not the brick and mortar, but the culture and people who live around it every day. There is history related to the place, culture, way of life, artisanship and economy developed based on the structure. They are not just reflectors of the past, but opportunities to generate employment and income in the present and future through heritage tourism. Proper management of these structures and sites can bring in a huge change in the lives of the people living in and around the place. At one point, it

is necessary to identify the heritage assets and prevailing traditions, which is intrinsically related to the identity of the residents of those areas; and on the other, preservation, conservation and promotion of the places can play a substantial role in enhancing the quality of life. The rural per capita income in India in terms of Net Value Added (NVA) is Rs. 40,925[1] in 2019. Even though 70 percent of the population still lives in villages, more than half of them are depended only on agriculture or allied activities. Villages are experiencing out-migration and marginalisation, and loss of cultural and biological diversity. Growth of rural tourism and heritage tourism will enhance the employment and business opportunities in the villages in a big way.

How Can Heritage Structures Change the Rural Economy?

There are various heritage structures with overwhelming cultural and historical significance in the rural hinterlands lying untapped and unattended. These are also tools for socio-economic upliftment at the local level and sustainability for future generations.

With the vaccine rollout for COVID-19 in the country, travel and tourism is now opening up. Due to the pandemic, people are now more interested in visiting less-crowded rural India. They are likely to visit destinations that are seen to be clean, healthy and pollution free. Travellers will play a major role in contributing to the economy of the villages, by generating business for local communities.

The pandemic has shown us the importance of local resources. There are traditional step wells which have heritage significance and also can be explored if the water sources can be revived. These will attract tourists on the one hand, with a multiplier effect on the village economy with development of infrastructure, shops, service facilities etc. and also solve the water issue faced by the people in the area. Preservation, management and promotion of these structures will contribute to the technical know how of the younger generation too.

Government of India, in its budget 2020-21, has proposed five archaeological sites, namely, Rakhigarhi (Haryana), Hastinapur (Uttar Pradesh) Shivsagar (Assam), Dholavira (Gujarat) and Adichanallur (Tamil Nadu) to be developed as iconic sites with on-site Museums. Rakhigarhi, the site of a pre-Indus Valley Civilisation settlement, dating back to about 6500 BCE village is located in Hisar District in Haryana. Dholavira, a site of ruins of ancient Indus Valley Civilisation/Harappan city is located near the Dholavira village in Gujarat. The site of Adichanallur, one of the oldest early Iron-Age cemeteries to exist in South Asia, is a small village in Tamil Nadu. These sites are of immense historical, religious and heritage significance and development of these will augment knowledge, recognition and tourism, which will boost the rural economy, enriching the socio-economic status of the inhabitants of the place.

There are six Buddhist Circuits under Swadesh Darshan Scheme of Ministry of Tourism. However, there is no specific circuit for Ashokan edicts and heritage. Further, there is no Buddhist Site under PRASHAD and only one site Mahabodhi temple is identified under Iconic Site Scheme. To attract the Buddhist tourists, particularly from South Asian and South East Asian countries, composite development of Heritage and Tourism of Iconic Buddhist Sites of significance in India can be undertaken. Ten Buddhist sites particularly major Ashokan edicts (Rock and Pillar), eg., 5 rock edicts Girnar, Sopara, Dhauli, Jaugada, Sannati, Yerragudi and five pillar edicts, namely Kalsi, Delhi, Vaishali,

Rampurva and Lauriyacan be developed in a circuit manner. These are invaluable assets in the form of the rock engraving or pillar of Emperor Ashoka on Buddhism. Many of these edicts are in villages far away from the main city. Similarly, reviving the lost traditional gardens, for example, the royal gardens of Bundelkhand can be a boost to the local rural economy.

Rural heritage with tribal settlements is now also being recognised under the category of 'Cultural Landscape' with the World Heritage inscription of Kanchendzonga National Park on 2016 on World Heritage list and Apatani cultural landscape, Cold desert cultural landscape of Spiti-Ladakh on the UNESCO's tentative list. The inhabitants in these places have unique ways of preserving ecology, using traditional methods to attain what the modern machines and systems have been unable to.

Policy Recommendations

An overarching management plan is required to revive the heritage structures with creating a National Archaeological Database at the outset. Advanced technology needs to be used for documentation, surveys, excavation, conservation, and promotion and marketing of the sites. Along with it, Heritage Tourism needs to be promoted with a focused and professional marketing strategy. Further, skilled staff is required for managing the monuments at the ground level. Post pandemic, rural tourism is likely to increase. This is the time, when tourist attractions can be drawn towards heritage sites/structures particularly in the rural India.

Following the guidelines of the National Conservation policy, conservations works result in utilisation of over 70 percent of project costs for crafts people wages. In projects such as archaeological excavations and desilting historic step-wells/tanks/wells almost 100 percent of the costs are for unskilled crafts people. Therefore, the National Policy on Conservation needs to be implemented vigorously by ASI and all State Archaeology Departments. The Policy also acclaims available traditional craftsmanship in the country and the use of traditional building materials, practices and skills as an integral part of the conservation process. It is a comprehensive policy

focusing on tourism and development (within and around a monument), capacity building, partnerships with multi-disciplinary organisations and institutions and the role of local communities. Some states have adopted it well, eg., in 2014, it was adopted by the State Archaeology of Rajasthan for its World Heritage Sites, which also practices few of other national policy clauses such as, engaging local crafts people and drafting region wise conservation schedule of rates. Such practices should be implemented across the country.

The Archaeological Survey of India (ASI) or State Archaeology Departments need to identify projects that could be carried out in rural areas with MNERGA funds. In some cases, such works can lead to other significant government objectives such as reviving historic water bodies and collecting rainwater too.

The 'Adopt a Heritage' project under the Government of India aims to develop the heritage sites/monuments, making them tourist-friendly and enhancing the tourism potential. This involves active participation of individuals, agencies to partner in the noble social responsibility initiative by becoming "Monument Mitra" through the innovative concept of Vision Bidding. Progress under Adopt a Heritage Scheme has been very slow, not much work can be seen in terms of on-site execution. Most Monument Mitras are running behind their committed schedule as per MoUs. A monitoring committee is required to review ongoing works under signed MoUs for their quality and adherence to timeline.

Under the 'Hunar se Rozgar Tak' programme of the Government of India, training can be imparted to the rural youth belonging to the economically weaker strata of the society to become tourist escorts, event facilitators, security guards, tour assistants, transfer assistants and office assistants. Attempts should be made to increase the skills of local people under the schemes like Pradhan Mantri Kaushal Vikas Yojana (PMKVY), SANKALP (Skills Acquisition and Knowledge Awareness for Livelihood Promotion), UDAAN along with Polytechnic Schemes and vocationalisation of education at school and higher education level, with heritage tourism in mind, in order to engage them and crafts people in their home states. Many skills can be technical and need advanced techniques; however, as seen in many cases, local ladies were engaged in restoration of artworks, for example in the monasteries in Ladakh.

The posts of multi-tasking staff required for duties in monuments and gardens may be filled up through outsourcing by engaging local persons who feel more connected with the monuments located in their home state. In case of attrition, the outsourcing agency will provide personnel with requisite skill with equal pace.

Projects can be participatory wherever possible including the community in reviewing design, involving them in maintenance such as volunteers for heritage walks, maintaining historic public spaces for reuse, advising them on maintenance for their historic houses, creating opportunities for local economy (crafts and other production). Local community participation is essential to protect, manage and promote the heritage structures. This gives a sense of ownership. While preparing conservation plans for heritage monuments or sites and their surroundings, which include development and infrastructure plans, local authorities should also be involved.

The scheme of Rural Tourism showcases rural life, culture, art, handloom and heritage of the place attracting tourists which benefits the local community economically and socially as well as enriches the interaction and experience between tourists and local population. Stronger support and partnership with the Local bodies, like Panchayats, NGOs, businesses and experts can enhance the proficiency of the heritage asset base and market it systematically. Participation of local authorities and people are needed in preservation and conservation of Biodiversity, eg., the SI and State Department of Goa manages the historic churches while some of the village panchayats and local rural communities are involved in preservation and conservation of biodiversity of the place too.

The site museums should develop its annual outreach programme of activities to engage all segments of visitors including children, families etc. Volunteers in the museums may also be from the local community, instilling a sense of pride among the local communities.

All heritage sites should develop special programmes for engaging school students' visits with a round the year calendar for children's workshops, activities and events. Special Heritage walks to enhance visitor experience with proper interpretation and storytelling on site or specialised interpretation centre needs to be implemented. Souvenir shops with innovative local crafts products need to be established.

From 'crowd funding' to 'community funding' new funding models can be explored, the archaeology departments can consider opening up the heritage structures to local communities to make them stakeholders, community participation can provide solutions both in terms of visitor interest as well as financial support.

The 'Ruritage' programme, promoted by UNESCO aims to create innovative, rural regeneration-based models for cultural and natural heritage. Similar programme may be launched for India, bringing the role of culture as the fourth pillar of sustainable development and to contribute to socially inclusive economic growth and environmental sustainability in rural areas. Rural India focused Incredible India 2.0 campaign showcasing the invaluable gems of our country along with the rich intangible assets of the country could be the post pandemic plan for the tourism sector.

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Indian Folk Art : An Information, Education and Communication Tool

Yugal Kishore Joshi

Folk media and folk entertainment are deeply entrenched in festivals and fairs. The popularity of folk is due to its inexhaustible treasure of vivid forms and meaningful themes. It draws its strength from age old traditional stories and mythology. It provides entertainment in local dialect and has the aesthetic air of belonging and affinity in local cultural context, thus it touches hearts and minds so easily.

It has been a common experience that without appropriate, adequate and intensive development communication, the mind and intent of the planning and policy do not percolate down to the people on ground the way it has been envisaged. Many times typed directions, bulky manuals, literature and guidelines are not read or understood at the implementation level for being highly technical, full of jargons and a few times soporific.

Therefore, in development communication a range of methods and approaches are utilised. Mass media, mid media, interpersonal communications, these all are employed with adoption of new technology innovations. But, experience of Swachh Bharat communication tells that it is the *triveni* of three elements: (i) a direct connect, (ii) traditional forms of communication i.e, use of folk art as communication media and (iii) an enabling environment, that touches the heart of people most and makes behaviour change possible.

Since he put the spotlight on sanitation in India with his iconic inaugural Independence Day speech in 2014, the Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi has been the communicator-in-chief of the Swachh Bharat Mission. He has an extraordinary communication capability that connects him to the heart and minds of the millions. In simple yet profound words he conveys his thoughts so easily that his Mann Ki Baat talks inspire millions

of Indians to work for the betterment of the country.

His unparalleled approach of using Mann Ki Baat to spread the message of sanitation with constant and regular reminders, his presiding over ten iconic mass swachhata events, and with his ability to inspire millions, the Prime Minister transformed the Swachh Bharat Mission (SBM) into a people's movement. His idea of 'Sankalp se Siddhi' inspired the iconic 'Swachh Sankalp se Swachh Siddhi' campaign where more than 5 crore students participated in swachhata programmes in a short period of two weeks. His concepts like 'Swachhata hi Seva', 'Swachhta is Everyone's Business', 'Swachh Iconic Places', 'Swachhta Action Plan' and 'Swachhagrahi' etc., catalysed the Mission.

The answer to the challenge of communicating swachhata message in simple yet effective and impactful ways also came from the Prime Minister. In his Mann Ki Baat address on 30 August 2015, he inspired people to use traditional festivals, arts and cultural ethos to bring a behaviour change about cleanliness. He said, "During this period from Raksha Bandhan to Diwali there is a series of festivals. Why don't we associate each festival with cleanliness? You will see how it becomes your nature."

The answer to the challenge of communicating swachhata message in simple yet effective and impactful ways also came from the Prime Minister. In his Mann Ki Baat address on 30 August 2015, he inspired people to use traditional festivals, arts and cultural ethos to bring a behaviour change about cleanliness.

Thus started a series of SBM IEC themes celebrating every festival, every traditional event with swachhata fervour by using traditional art and folk communication methods. This had an immediate connect with the people of our diverse country where it is said that in every 12 kms (4 kos) a dialect is replaced by another.

This changed the development communication narrative prevalent since 1953. In the First Five Year Plan document it was emphasized that, "A widespread understanding of the Plan is an essential stage in its fulfilment. An understanding of the priorities of the Plan will enable each person to relate his or her role to the larger purpose of the nation as a whole. All available methods of communication have to be developed and the people approached through the folk media, then after that written and spoken word no less than through radio, film, song and drama."

Therefore, the development communication was thought as step-by-step process where folk media was at the core. Such compartmentalisation was not enough to create a kind of *janandolan* that Swachh Bharat Mission could achieve in recent years. In SBM all mediums of communications were treated as complimentary to one another and packaged in one. This led to a composite, impactful and inspiring IEC campaign that has the wider flexibility with interactivity of the folk media and audience saturation by the mass media.

Folk Media and Development Communication

The popularity of the folk media is because of its inexhaustible treasure of vivid forms, local aesthetics and meaningful themes. It draws its strength from age old traditional stories and mythology. Thus, remains forever young in its appeal. It provides entertainment in local dialect and has the aesthetic air of belonging and affinity in local cultural context, thus it touches hearts and minds so easily. Despite arrival of the mass media and new communication technologies it still exists as a vital mode of communication in rural hinterland.

For a long time, the literature on development communication ignored the role of the folk media. A reason for that may be the colonial mind-set. It was thought that since the folk media is an extension of the local culture, they might inhibit or discourage the modernisation. It was thought as a reinforcement agent for traditional culture of the local community and thus naturally against the direction of modern attitudes and behaviour.[1]

As a result, most of development communication resources were devoted to technology based mediums like radio and television. It was thought that new age information needs new age symbols. Thus entirely new paradigm was created that was almost alien to the local culture.

The experience in India showed that these top down communication approaches though

were peripherally successful to send across the message but they could not bring the necessary behaviour change at grassroots. In a big country like India where participation of people is the most essential condition for success of any social reform, culture obviously becomes a facilitator of development. An integration of traditional and modern communication systems is thus important in rural India.

In early 1970s various communication experts and authors began to advocate traditional media as a very effective tool in rural communication process. It was emphasised that in a developing, predominantly rural, multi-lingual and diverse country like India, folk institutions, traditions and culture serve as a significant tool in motivating rural masses towards the government programmes implemented at national, state and district levels.

Few inherent characteristics of the folk media that make it popular are:

1. Audience participation is an integral part of the folk media. Irrespective of the age group it provides them enhanced pride and honour.
2. It's lively, dramatic and lyrical entertainment that satisfies the innate need of self-expression.
3. Folk media techniques are simple and easy and reflect cultural ethos. Thus it touches people's heart.

For example, people get attracted to *tamashas* (musical dance shows with a comedian and associate troupe) because of its lively performance, contemporary story line, colourful presentation, melody, dance and compatibility with local audience culture. *Bhajans* are quite popular because of familiar religious themes, melodious voice of the singer and again compatibility with local audience culture. *Kirtans* are a continuous flow of discourses of religious nature with contemporary sermons. The reasons for their popularity are almost same as those of *bhajans*.[2]

Nautanki is another popular folk media. Its operatic theatre performance traditions are popular in North India. It has intense melodic exchange among performers who do song, dance, skit, comedy and chorus singing. *Nautankies* were used extensively in family planning, anti-dowry campaigns Similarily dramas, *quawwallis, dhandhar*, puppet show, *Harikatha, Pala, Daskathia* and other mediums attract huge crowds.

These examples are not complete without mentioning *Jatra*. *Jatra* is a popular folk theatre in West Bengal, Odisha, Tripura, Assam and Bihar. It is a very long play preceded by a musical concert. Musical concert is often used to attract the audience. *Jatra* is played on an open stage and enjoys a wide audience base. These *Jatras* have been used to bring literary works to the villages.

Folk media is deeply entrenched in festivals and fairs. In India we have festivals for every season, deity, rituals, history and for all occasions. For example, in a small state like Uttarakhand, there are 12 major festivals in a year, almost one in every month. Every festival has its unique colour, dedication, power and vivacity. Every state or every region has culture or region-specific festivals for example Onam in Kerala, Pongal in Tamil Nadu, Ganesh Chaturthi in Maharashtra, Rath Yatra in Odisha, Durga Puja in Bengal, Phool Dei in Uttarakhand, Baisakhi in Punjab etc. Festivals are the times when all kinds of folk art, dance, drama and other events are organised and experienced by millions. Therefore, these festivals and fairs are great occasions to communicate the behaviour change messages.

It is not that the traditional forms of communication and the folk media were not used earlier. The mobile units of the Directorate of Field Publicity also provide intimate and vibrant communication to rural people. The Song and Drama Division (SDD) of the Ministry of Information and Broadcasting was created in 1954 to meet the need to use folk media for development. Since then it has been using folk media such as theatre, mime, song puppetry, ballets and dances for informing people about services and programmes made available by the government. It has been performing a commendable function of creating awareness about government programmes among rural people for their benefit through its 12 regional centres, more than 1000 empanelled artistes and 700 registered troupes.

However, often in communication literature the folk media is mentioned as medium with limitations. The argument given is that the number of people folk media reaches in a whole year is less

than what the cinemas in the city do in less than a week.[3]

How Swachh Bharat Mission overcame these limitations, we will discuss below.

The Communicator-in-Chief

In the beginning I mentioned about the *triveni* of communication elements: a direct connect, the folk media and an enabling environment. In our experience of past five years we found that best form of communication is interpersonal or direct communication. Where the communicator talks to people directly, in their language and in listeners environment. Folk media IEC tools then reinforce this communication and create an enabling environment. Meeting of mind happens when the listeners understand and come to a kind of agreement with the programme.

The Prime Minister's deep understanding of the Indian culture and traditions inspired the Swachh Bharat communication. It helped the Mission to create an enabling environment that is a prerequisite for behaviour change at scale.

There are many examples from Swachh Bharat Mission but here I would like to refer to his Mann Ki Baat address on 30 June 2019 focussed on water conservation. It shows how impeccably the Prime Minister connects individual with folk media tools, our traditions and ethos of water conservation.

He begins with a call for action, "Let's also start a mass movement for water conservation. We together should all resolve to save every drop of water and I believe that water is God's *prasad* to us, water is like philosopher's stone! Earlier it was said that by the touch of philosopher's stone, iron could be transmuted in to gold. I tell you, water is philosopher's stone and its mere touch creates and regenerates life!"

He, then appeals to people from all walks of life, "I specifically urge the luminaries belonging to different walks of life to lead promotion of water conservation through innovative campaigns. Whether it be from the world of films, sports, our friends in the media, people belonging to social organizations, people associated with cultural organizations or people involved in conducting devotional congregations such as Katha – Kirtan, everyone should lead this movement in their own fashion. We must wake up the society, unite the society and join the society in this endeavour. You'll see, we will find change occurring in front of our own eyes."

Then he urges the people to utilise traditional wisdom of India. "I urge all of you to share these traditional methods of water conservation. If any of you gets an opportunity to go to Porbandar, the place of birth of revered Bapu, then there is a house behind the house of revered Bapu, where a 200-year old water tank still exists. It is still capable of storing water and has a mechanism to harvest rain water! As I always say that whosoever visits Kirti Mandir, should also pay a visit to that Water Tank. And there must be many types of such examples of experimentation in water conservation throughout our nation!"

Then he speaks about creating an enabling environment, urging everyone to join the movement and creating a pool of information, "My third request to all of you is that share the information concerning the people who are making significant contributions towards water conservation, NGOs and everyone else associated in the area of water conservation in order to create an intensive database of individuals and organizations dedicated to water preservation. Come let us join water conservation, and involve ourselves in making a list of more and more innovative methods to motivate people to conserve water."

When he says, "everyone should lead this movement in their own fashion. We must wake up the society, unite the society and join the society in this endeavour"; he is freeing the spirit of expression and thus urging people to make a network of all possible media to make the water conservation successful.

This is what Swachh Bharat Mission's IEC also tried to follow.

Swachh Bharat Mission and Folk Media

Three years ago during my visit to Champawat in Uttarakhand, the district IEC team took me to a faraway village. It was few kilometres uphill from the nearest roadhead. After an awareness programme arranged by local swachhagrahies (sanitation volunteers) in Kumauni dialect, traditional *chholia* dancers suddenly appeared at the venue. *Chholia* dance is very popular in local marriages. Dressed in

bright randomly stitched multi-coloured frock and pyjamas, a white turban on head, these *chholia* dancers carry a sword and a shield in their hands. They sing, dance and shadow fight to entertain the marriage party. News of the *chholias* dancing spread like a wildfire and within few minutes hundreds of women, children and men assembled at the venue. In our SBM IEC programme, they shadow fought, danced on the tune of *swachhata* songs woven in local *ragas*. The impact of their performance was much beyond our imagination. After a couple of month I got the news that the village had become open defecation free (ODF).

Such occurrences happened across the country in almost all gram panchayats. Folk painting styles, and all other mediums like *katha-kirtan, nautanki, tamasha, jatra* etc. were used by the swachhagrahis. Competitions like *rangoli* and *aipan, jhoti* (a traditional art forms that uses rice paste) were organised for women, girls and children at OD sites after cleaning the place and planting basil or *Tulsi* saplings. In Odisha districts, *parimal ghanta naada* (clean sound of a local instrument) were carried out at dawn.

Few more examples are mentioned below

Following the Indian traditional custom of honouring a pregnant woman during the second half of her pregnancy, Karnataka districts such as in Kalaburgi an initiative *Koosu* was launched. *Koosu*, meaning a child in Kannada, campaign was launched to promote hygiene practice among women. Under this a small programme was devised, wherein after an antenatal check-up, a pregnant woman having a toilet was honoured and her baby shower was organised by the local gram panchayat.

In the districts of Maharashtra, to promote swachhata with Ganesha Chaturthi, programmes like Swachh Bail Pola, Swachh Ganeshotsava, Swachh Gauri Pujan etc. were organised. In Bihar, Goddess Durga (a girl dressed as the goddess) visited homes with toilets during Durga Puja celebrations. Swachhata messages were broadcasted in Durga Puja pandals.

Using age old Indian practice of fasting, 30 Sarpanches of Baran district in Rajasthan took vows to have just one meal per day until their villages became ODF. Initially people were sceptical but once they saw the determination of the Panchayat leaders they too joined the movement.

In Jharkhand, village ODF declarations were often organised during cultural festivals. The daylong celebration had local sports, indigenous dances and songs to celebrate the swachhata. In Madhya Pradesh, the *vanar sena* comprising young boys monitored the common open defecation sites each morning. Inspired by the mythical army

of Lord Rama, these children held communities accountable for any open defecation practice.

Following the great tradition was evident at *Swachh Kumbh Swachh Aabhaar* programme on 24th February 2019. In a private interaction, the Prime Minister honoured and paid respect to the safai karmacharis working in the Kumbh mela, by washing and wiping the feet of five safai karmacharis.

Swachh Bharat Mission could weave these all events in one with the help of about 6 lakh volunteers, named *swachhagrahis* by the Prime Minister. Thousands of Swachhata Raths (mobile vans) were rolled out in States to cover every village of the country. Usually mounted on mini-trucks, equipped with LED panels, audio systems, these vans carried a team of nukkad natak mandali and folk artistes. These Raths proved very effective in engaging community members using folk arts, interpersonal communication and showing them IEC creatives. These two innovations contributed immensely in communicating swachhta message through folk media to the millions of people.

The Mission decided to use each and every occasion, each and every festival to spread the message. Baisakhi, Onam, Pongal, Basant Panchami / Saraswati Pooja, Shivratri, Holi, Navaratris, Eid, Easter, Buddha Jayanti, Mahavir Jayanti, Ram Navami, Raksha Bandhan, Vijayadashmi, Diwali, Guru Purnima, Christmas, all festivals were linked to swachhta and accordingly befitting folk media was mapped and awareness programmes were conducted in mass scale. National celebrations like Independence Day, Republic Day and Gandhi Jayanti were celebrated with precurser swachhata events likely Gandagi se Azadi Saptah, Gandagi Mukt Bharat and Swachhata Hi Seva.

Important dates on calendar such as International Women's Day, World Water Day, Champaran Satyagrah day, International Yoga day, Global Handwashing Day, Panchayati Raj Diwas, Antyoday Diwas, Teacher's Day, Children Day, World Toilet Day and Good Governance Day were utilised for mass events such as Swachh Shakti, Chalo Champaran, Village Immersion Programmes, Toilet aapka Adhikar, Mujhe Shauchalay Chahiye, Toilet Construction drives and student events etc.

The success of Swachh Bharat communication was based on combining folk media with electronic / social media and mass events. For example, a popular radio campaign was developed around salesman Shaucha Singh. Every village haat, every rural fair or even bus passengers are aware of a chirpy, persuasive and entertaining salesman of the toiletries. Shaucha Singh addressed popular myths that acted as barriers to eliminating open defecation in the lingo and manners of a typical loud salesman.

When the Mission launched a month long *Swachh Sundar Shauchalay* campaign urging people to paint and beautify their toilets, thousands of people used folk symbols and painting styles to do so. More than 1.3 crore toilets were painted in a month's time mostly by using popular and folk slogans, pictures and symbols.

To reiterate, one of the reasons of SBM's success in bringing behaviour change among crores of Indians was its proactive and judicious use of folk media in amalgamation of modern technology and huge public participation.

To use the folk media as an effective development communication tool, finer technical points such as selection of appropriate folk media, artistes and language are important but also equally important are the use of modern technology and aids. However, for effective large-scale behaviour changes such as usage of toilets, we must have a dedicated volunteer force on ground that keeps the flame burning.

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Showcasing Folk Art and Culture at Global Stage

Hemanth Menon

India is home to over 2500 tribes and ethnic groups that are both recognised and unrecognised. Art, including music, dance, crafts, and paintings has found its way into these groups, giving rise to at least a few thousand forms of art, yet only a few find their way into the mainstream. Participatory movements and efforts involving documentation could facilitate the ambitious National Mission on Cultural Mapping and Roadmap, launched by the Ministry of Culture.

Known to be one of the most ancient civilisations of the world with a rich and diverse cultural heritage and a conglomeration of cultures, India has always maintained its cultural heritage as an integral aspect of its global projection. While maintaining consistency in its promotion of varied arts in the international domain, India looks forward hopefully and eagerly to UNESCO's upcoming meeting of the Intergovernmental Committee for the Safeguarding of Intangible Cultural Heritage. A decision will be taken at this meeting about including 'Durga Puja' in the Representative List of the Intangible Cultural Heritage of Humanity. Last year, the Ministry of Culture had launched a draft National List of Intangible Cultural Heritage (ICH) of India as part of its Vision 2024. Through this, it aims to increase awareness about the various intangible cultural heritage elements from different states of India at the national and international level to ensure their protection and preservation. Under these developing circumstances, let us dwell upon the clamouring need to showcase the traditional Indian folk art and culture at the international level.

Defining before Dealing

Several attempts have been made by scholars, linguists, artists, politicians, policymakers, etc. to define the concept of Folk in a generalised sense. Such an exercise is essential to understand any concept as objectively as possible. The term 'Folk in most of the languages in India,' loosely

corresponds to the sense of the community. With dilating languages and dialects, and changing expressions of social groups and their traditions, the idea of Folk recasts itself making it truly difficult to generalise it in the Indian Context. But at the same time, it also then becomes the strength of what is the very basis of our Cultural Heritage, reinforcing the motto: 'Unity in Diversity.'

With changing praxes, as one would see, while travelling along the length and breadth of India; a myriad of cultural expressions get unearthed itself. Even today, researchers are striving hard to enumerate, with utmost precision, every constituent form belonging to our Folk Culture. Sure, close similarities can be pointed out among various folk forms while attempting to make umbrella classifications. But the quintessential spirit of folk culture reveals itself clearly, distinguishing it from other art forms. For instance, the Folk dances - 'Ghode Modini' from Goa, 'Poikkaal Kuthirai Aattam' from Tamil Nadu and 'Kachchi Ghodi' from Rajasthan, may all appear to be the same, at least in their appearances. 'Ghode Modini' is performed to praise warriors from Goa, draped in Rajput costumes, who fought ferocious battles against the Portuguese and to drive out thieves from villages. 'Kachchi Ghodi', on the other hand, uses the folk media at weddings to narrate the tales of the Bhanwariya bandit. 'Poikkal Kuthirai' instead is linked to the worship of Ayyanar in costumes of kings and queens indulging in acrobatics for hours.

One can cite many more examples like these to effectively illustrate the diversity that exists in the folk tradition in India. But then, hurdles come in the path whilst attempting to showcase such forms on a national and an international level. Classical Arts can be still handled comfortably. But Folk Arts, owing to its excessive diversity, are typecast to something difficult to manage. Stratification of culture into Classical, Folk, Tribal art forms into the categories of comfort and convenience has created a commotion that has, to an extent, debarred the so-called "less learned" from appreciating it in its original flavour. Sadly, this has caused the relegation of forms other than classical to relics in near exhibition spaces and textbooks while originally being backed by rituals, ceremonies and traditions.

A Parley with the Classical Folks

One can trace back the roots of the classical arts to 'Natya Shastra' by Bharata Muni, which was first compiled between 200 BCE to 200 CE. Yet, it is amusing to note that not a single art form is mentioned explicitly in it and naturally, any stratification of art in words. Over the years, several visionaries have come forward attempting to document and codify some art forms based on these texts, making them accessible to more willing learners. It was also the earliest modes of preservation of culture. These model codes were not only used by art practitioners but also by linguists, to analyse the language and grammar of the text. Scholars and connoisseurs used them to better understand the setting and trends of the form. This led to the creation of a learned audience or Rasikas. Through books like Abhinaya Darpana by Nandikeshvara or the Sangita Ratnakara by Sarngadeva, these 'cultured' audiences could understand art, breaking barriers. The patronage received from the imperial heads under the Indian subcontinent opened darbars to artists.

In a parallel setting, people viewed and treated art from a perspective that connected them with life itself. To them, the ornamental darbars, courts and amphitheatres were far from being accessible. They instead turned fields, pavements under the trees, mela grounds, cattle sheds into breeding grounds of Art. While some sang and danced, others created allied accompaniments that cleared paths for more forms of expression to hatch. The intent of these forms was different, unlike the ones in the darbars. They closely depicted their life, social relationships, work and religious affiliations, including that with Nature. For example, Bhimmas, a sect of Gonds in Chhattisgarh, played large single-headed drums to appeal to their god Bhim, third of the Pandavas for Rain. Several folk musicals and dance forms had similar purposes.

Colonialism to an extent has facilitated this exclusivity. The anti-nautch movement was not just successful in banning the classical art forms in India then, but also was successful in throwing the folk forms under the shadow of the then banned forms. Revivalist movements that followed for their respective reasoning, focussed mostly on the banned forms. In due course of time, not only

did these movements not retire but also urged mainstream art proponents to not channelise their attention to other forms of art. Due to lack of support and encouragement and consequent lack of popularity and adequate recognition, several forms like Lai Haraoba, Vilasini Natyam, Bor Geet, Gaudiya Nritya, Hari Katha, Mahari, Kuchipudi Yakshagana, Krishnanattam, Ranmale, Hojagiri have all been arrested to the geographical boundaries associated with the places of its origin.

Today, India is home to over 2500 tribes and ethnic groups that are both recognised and unrecognised. Art including music, dance, crafts, and paintings have found their way into these groups giving rise to at least a few thousand forms of art, yet only a few find their way into mainstream art. Because of the better availability of standard codes for assessment and yardsticks to ensure quality, more efforts have been put to preserve Classical Arts over the other. This has also pushed other art forms to take inspiration from the more economically rewarding and popular art forms, compromising the originality in the process when in reality it is difficult to pronounce where folk ends and classical begins, even if there was a systematic demarcation.

This doesn't necessarily mean that today traditional Indian folk culture is thoroughly neglected. The government machinery in their respective capacities has tried their best in drawing Folk Culture along with other Classical Art forms to a Global Setting. The number of schemes and policy decisions implemented for the promotion of folk arts has increased in the last decade. The Government of India, through the Ministry of Culture, the Ministry of External Affairs through ICCR, the Ministry of Tourism, the Ministry of Minority Affairs, has actively intervened for the promotion

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of Traditional Folk Art and Culture. Through ICCR, in the last six years alone, ₹ 1267.71 crores (ICCR Report, 2014-2020) was spent as Grant-in-Aid to various agencies for the promotion of Art. The government has organised 'Festivals of India Abroad' and 'Namaste India' in countries like Senegal, Côte d'Ivoire, Liechtenstein, Korea and Ukraine. ICT initiatives including the Sanskriti Channel, Virtual Museums and the Indian Culture portal, have tried reducing the distance between Art and Art enthusiasts overseas. Know India Programme, a three-week orientation programme by the Ministry of External Affairs, has created a unique forum for youth diaspora to acquaint themselves with Indian Culture and Heritage. Promotion of Culture Ties with Diasporas (PCTD) schemes, various commemorations and festivals, establishments/renovations of cultural centres like the recent centre in Jaffna, Sri Lanka have all facilitated the showcasing of traditional Indian Culture at an international level. India has signed several bilateral agreements with other countries for Cultural Exchanges and Promotion. Various schemes through the seven established Zonal Culture Centres with headquarters at Patiala, Nagpur, Udaipur, Prayagraj, Kolkata, Dimapur and Thanjavur have also extended a helping hand in this effort. Since 2015, eleven Rashtriya Sanskriti Mahotsavs have been organised under the Ek Bharat Shreshtha Bharat campaign. Flagship programmes like Lok Kala Darshan, Lok Nritya Bharat Bharati, Tribal Dance Festival, Folk Theater Festival, Lok Gyan Parampara have also served a catalyst in the pursuit to protect and promote folk culture. The Parley of Folk with the Classical can be salvaged to a great extent if spaces are created for Folk and Tribal Culture in all the 38 functioning ICCR Centres along with Classical Arts, Languages and Yoga.

Despite all such efforts and that having emphasised so much about how Folk Culture emanated, encompassing traditions; it is quite natural for one to think why there is a need to 'showcase' or 'project' something as personal as a ritual or a tradition to a sect of people in the name of preservation.

The Showcase Paradox

More often than not, a common concern that has been raised by the commoners who would excuse themselves from the complexity of the Classical-Folk dichotomy has been the disconnect they have felt with the lesser popular Folk forms. As mentioned before, rural and tribal folk art emerged from the raw lifestyles of the common man and was not necessarily meant for a proscenium setting. Thus, while promoting such forms, extra care is to be exercised. The very intent of promoting culture is for its preservation. There is a sense of haste when one takes the pledge to promote the Arts. This haste pushes them to fast forward the efforts. Intricate and intangible elements of the form get neglected, diluting the grandeur and uniqueness of each folk form today. An impatience to exhibit and popularise folk arts without preserving their original flavour and distinctiveness, through increased marketing of folk culture to boost the economy, may strip any folk form of its uniqueness and its individual speciality. This is more dangerous than ignoring the Arts. In the process of showcasing a fraction of culture, it is subjected to several strains, the strain of making it more appealing, the strain of presenting it in an alien environment, etc. Artistes face the audience with the same trepidation that animals face when within a zoo. Preservation and conservation in India have been perhaps limited to that of the Traditional Tribal and Folk Art. Conservators and Museologists have done a commendable job in preserving the vibrant and colourful art forms. It may be so because of the potential it holds in the international market owing to its aesthetic sensibility and authenticity. It has helped art forms like Ganjifa painting, Bhil painting, Roghan Art, Champa Rumal to return to popular culture. Transportation Hubs including Metro stations and Airports in India have also volunteered in preserving and sensitising the passenger crowd it holds about various Art forms. To an extent, yes, this effort has helped India in the drive to preserve its Fine, Folk and Tribal arts to

Transportation Hubs including Metro stations and Airports in India have also volunteered in preserving and sensitising the passenger crowd it holds about various Art forms. To an extent, yes, this effort has helped India in the drive to preserve its Fine, Folk and Tribal arts to near perfection.

near perfection. But this exercise of encasement is practical only for Visual Arts. Sacred forms like Baul Sangeet, Sopana Sangeeta, Theyyam, Gurbani and Qawwali need to be preserved in their original sacrosanct form rather than being solely presented as a cultural extravaganza in a performer-audience setting. Facilitating socially relevant forms like Bihu, Jhijian, Kalbelia will sensitise audiences to the rootedness of these art forms.

Many traditional cultures have been uprooted by war and also by the urge to move to urban areas where a more settled and reliable life can be practised. The pursuit to bring the folk into the mainstream through implementing policies, use of communication facilities, has also been invasive in the traditional domain in a sense that strips away the barriers that once protected them. But the dilemma arises when, despite the intrusion, it makes it possible to preserve the memory of such forms before they vanish from our sight. The argument continues as one calls for the preservation of culture whilst maintaining the status quo. There is also another conceptual dilemma. The idea of taking an art form to an international level is rarely applied beyond the literal interpretation. It then becomes limited to taking culture to a foreign land. The very idea of globalisation was to bring the world to the doorstep. There are several places and occasions in India of International interest. The doors of tourism and the economy open wider through this. A great extent of authenticity is brought to such places and festivals when Traditional Folk Culture is also highlighted. A model case that can be referred to is the Kumbh Mela, which was held in 2019. Various agencies responsible for the Promotion and Safeguarding of Culture that included Ministry of Culture, Sangeet Natak Akademi, IGNCA, various ZCCs and SPIC MACAY joined hands to put up a Sanskriti Kumbh, wherein Art, irrespective of the divides imposed on it, was brought together on a single platform. Through Kumbh Mela, a recognised list item in the representative list of Intangible Cultural Heritage of Humanity, there was an attempt to promote other forms of art, tangible and intangible. Therefore, the article started with the reference to Durga Puja being under the consideration of UNESCO. Such large congregations of culture in a very fitting setting can to an extent add value to the efforts to preserve culture. This does not mean the questions posed are resolved. They are still required to be examined and answered. There is a pressing need to identify what to promote and how to promote. Until then, the quest to truly understand the way to preserve such a plethora of culture would take a significant amount of time before it sees light at the end of the tunnel.

So what is the way out? Participatory movements and efforts involving documentation could facilitate the ambitious National Mission on Cultural Mapping and Roadmap, launched by the Ministry of Culture. Instead of taking art forms to people, initiatives like 'Dekho Apna Desh' will help people go back to their roots, help appreciate that of others, and experience them in their natural setting so that torchbearers of culture needn't migrate from their habitat in search of opportunities. It is critical that the Culture is first preserved in the vicinity of where it originated, then comes the sensitisation of them in the other parts of the country before its showcase is even planned at an international level. Establishments of more specialised agencies focussing purely on Folk Art and Culture headed by Scholars and gurus who have proved their prowess could catalyse the process of promotion and through it the preservation of Folk Culture without divesting it of its sanctity. Nevermore urgent and immediate than now is the need for various stakeholders, who are responsible for preserving arts, to ensure the preservation of the diverse folk arts and not just classical arts by setting up gurukuls where these traditions will be passed on in their original and purest versions to future generations with the freedom to gurus without being subjected to administrative slackening in the working.

Our Heritage and Culture sure can elevate us but for it to elevate us, there is a need for us to be initiated to it and let us march towards that initiation before it is too late.

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Art and Crafts of Northeast India

Dr Tapati Baruah Kashyap

The Prime Minister's call for India to become AatmaNirbhar has enabled a greater focus on the traditional art and crafts sector of the North-eastern region, so that such a rich heritage does not get wiped away due to so-called modernisation. North-east's artistic communities have a wide range of handicraft products, inspired by distinct and unique culture tradition of tribal communities and groups.

The North-eastern region of India bears a huge testimony to the country's colourful tradition and heritage. The seven states of the region is home to over 160 major Scheduled Tribes and over 400 other tribal and sub-tribal communities and groups, each having its own distinct and unique cultural tradition, replete with a rich history and folklore. Moreover, members of each tribe and community are born artisans, producing a wide range of art and craft products befitting their respective traditions. Let us first take a glance at some of the various handloom products.

Handloom

Father of the Nation Mahatma Gandhi had once said that the women of Assam weave dreams on their looms. This statement in fact applies to the women of every community of the North-eastern region, with women in every household considering their looms as their most prized possession. Thus, every indigenous community of this region whether in the hills or in the plains, has its own range of handloom textiles, each also depicting the distinct identity of the tribe or community. While women of the tribal communities use the loin-loom, others use the handloom to produce a wide

range of textiles. The fabrics woven for women also come in different colour combinations for different communities, some made of cotton, some of *muga* (golden silk), *endi* (warm silk) and some others of *paat* (white silk). In Assam, Assamese women weave the three-piece *mekhela-chador* and *riha*, while Bodo women produce the brilliant *dokhona-jwmgra* and *aronai*. Women of the Rabha community on the other hand weave *khambung* and *riphan*, while Mishing women produce *sumpa* and *galuk*, to name a few.

Likewise, in Manipur, women of the Meitei community weave the *phanek*, Tangkhuls weave the *kasan*, Paites, Vaipheis and Zous produce different types of *puan*, Thadous the *khamtang* and Koms the *punkophoi*. In Nagaland too, women of different tribal communities weave their respective wrappers, loincloths, scarves and aprons. The Ao shawl thus is known as *tsungkotepsu*, and the Angami shawl is called *loramhousho*. In Arunchal Pradesh, Singpho women weave the *pukang*, Nyishi women the *par-ij*, Apatani women the *bilan-abi* and *chinyu-abi*. In Mizoram, women weave different varieties of the *puan* – a drape and uncut rectangular fabric with well-crafted edges, as also the *punchei* and *tuallohpuan*.

In Meghalaya, the *jeinsem* worn by Khasi women comes in different colours and materials including *muga*, silk and cotton. Bhupen Hazarika, in one of his songs, had described the *jeinsem* as having been woven of strands of the lightning. Garo women of Meghalaya weave the *dakmanda*, and occasionally an *eking* too. Their counterparts in the Reang and other tribal communities of Tripura on the other hand are experts in weaving the *rignai* and *pasara*.

Apart from fabrics and dress materials, women across the region also weave a number of other items having commercial value. The *gamosa* – a traditional hand-woven cotton towel – of Assamese women have remained so popular that the Prime Minister too is often seen with one around his neck. Different Naga shawls too have remained popular across the country, and so also the Bodo scarf *aronai*. Similarly, carpets, and more particularly *tangkhas* and wall-hangings containing depiction of Buddha, *bodhisattvas*, monastic accessories, religious objects etc, as also dragons and other motifs made by the Monpas of Arunachal Pradesh have attracted worldwide attention.

Bamboo and Cane

North-east's artistic communities also have a wide range of handicraft products, mostly manufactured of bamboo, cane and reed. The Northeast is home to at least 90 species of bamboos, of which 41 are endemic to the region. There is a popular saying in Assamese – "*jaar nai baanh, taar nai saah*" ("One who doesn't have bamboo, has no courage").

Almost every community in the Northeast has workmanship of high order as far as bamboo and cane products are concerned. Be it the Adi, Apatani, Sherdukpen, Tangsa or Khamti tribe of Arunachal Pradesh, or the Reang, Jamatia, Noatia or Uchai tribe of Tripura, making farm baskets, carrying baskets, grain holders, winning fans, drying trays, fishing traps, food containers, hand-fans, mats, bird and animal cages, field-hats and food plates from bamboo, or chairs, stools, tables, cots, belts, anklets, toys, hats and headgears, etc. of cane is almost part of daily life. There are also different baskets for carrying firewood, water, paddy, rice and vegetables. Some baskets are made of bamboo and cane, supplemented with various leaves and grasses, are used for storing cloths, ornaments, and other valuable items. Baskets in fact come in various shapes and sizes flat, rectangular, cylindrical, conical, with constricted mouth, with or without lids, depending upon the purpose, with smaller replicas of various baskets now finding way to drawing rooms in towns and cities as decorative items. The *husak* of the Galo tribe, the bye of the Padams, the egin of the Miniyongs, the *akhi* and *akha of the Angamis, the dawrawn and bontong of the Mizos – all depict the wide variety and rich creativity of the communities.*

With changing time and demand, bamboo and cane products like chairs, tables, stools, sofa-sets, beds and cots, shelves, besides lamp-shades, screens and hats etc have begun finding market not just within the country, but abroad too.

Hats and caps, mostly made of bamboo and cane, as also abandoned animal parts like feathers shed by different birds, on the other hand not only have cultural and hierarchical value, but have also provided means of livelihood to thousands of families across the region. In Assam, the decorative *jaapi* made of bamboo and palm-leaves is almost a must for welcoming guests and VVIPs. Residents of

several villages in fact are almost solely dependent on *jaapi*-making as a livelihood. Similarly, the Adi *bolup*, the Apatani *bopa*, both of Arunachal Pradesh, and the Mizo *varika* – not only bear deep cultural significance, but have attracted both buyers and researchers as well. In Arunachal Pradesh, they even make hanging bridges across swift-flowing rivers including the Siang (Brahmaputra) with cane and bamboo.

Cane and bamboo craft occupies an important place in the economy of Meghalaya, next only to agriculture. The bamboo and cane products of the Khasi, Jaintia and Garo people of Meghalaya are mostly of two types – articles of regular daily use at home and farms, and articles of finer quality, both decorative and functional, to meet the requirements and tastes of more sophisticated markets. Tribal villagers of Meghalaya are experts in cane baskets and sieves. The state's popular cane and bamboo products include pig-baskets, different kinds of fruit-baskets, coiled can containers, furniture, storage baskets, winnowing trays and fans, mud-shovel, rain-shields, bamboo combs, pipes and spoons, to name a few.

Woodcraft

Besides bamboo and cane, the North-eastern region also abounds in a wide variety of trees that provide raw-material to the communities to make various items out of wood. Wood-carving is popular across the region, and products range from human figures, replicas of birds and animals, door frames and furniture etc. Wood carving or woodcraft is particularly notable among the tribal communities of Nagaland. Every Naga village has a highly decorative wooden gateway, while each village house is a piece of master woodwork. Carvings denoting various traditional symbols of different tribes can be seen all over. Additionally, most Naga kitchenware and tableware are also made of wood.

Different Naga tribes like Ao, Konyak, Sangtam, Phom, Chang, Khiamniungam and Yimchunger, also make amazing log-drums – carved out of solid pieces of logs – as part of their community tradition. The log-drum, hollowed out from a single tree trunk, is sometimes up to 12 metres long and three metres in circumference. In the past, log-drums were used for war-purposes – to warn against an approach enemy. Log-drums are also used to announce a festival or a death in the community, as also to raise an alarm when a fire breaks out.

In Arunachal Pradesh also, wood carving varies from tribe to tribe. The Sherdukpen and Monpa artisans produce a variety of door and window

frames, boxes and wooden saddles, apart from beautifully painted household items like bowls, cups, plates and saucers. The magnificent wooden masks produced by the Monpa, Sherdukpen, Memba and Khamba tribes, used in ceremonial dances are really eye-cathing. Wood carving of the Khamti, Wancho, and Tangsa communities on the other hand depicts human figures, as also replicas of birds and animals, apart from various daily-use items. The Khamtis, being Buddhists by faith, also make beautiful images of various deities.

In Assam, the *dhol* played in Rongali bihu is made of wood, so are traditional drums of the Bodo, Rabha, Mishing and Karbi communities. Monks in *satra* monasteries create sculpted wooden door-frames, and various kinds of *guru-asana* – the altar where the holy scripture is kept inside the *naam-ghar*, the traditional prayer-hall. Most parts and accessories associated with the loom are also made of wood.

Masks

As in most indigenous communities the world over, indigenous communities of North-eastern India also manufacture and use a variety of masks in their rituals and festivals. Masks are also associated with various indigenous religious faiths and beliefs. In Assam, mask-making is particularly concentrated in the Satra institutions – Vaishnavite monasteries – in Majuli, the world's largest inhabited river island. Artisans, mostly monks, use bamboo, cane, clay, cloth, jute, coir and paper pulp to make masks, which are integral part of traditional *bhawona* performance. Various deities, demons, birds, animals, reptiles and some mythological characters are represented through these masks. The Monpas and Sherdukpens of Arunachal Pradesh use a wide range of masks in their traditional and ritual dances and festivals. These are made of handmade paper, cloth, fur, feathers, bamboo and cane.

Jewellery

Jewellery is said to be a mirror of a community's culture and tradition. Different communities of the North-east too make their own traditional jewellery. In Assam, traditional gold and silver jewellery has a special place in marriage ceremonies, as also part a dancing girl's attire during Rongali bihu. Traditional Assamese ornaments include *dugdugi, jonbiri, dholbiri, lokaparo, golpata, kerumoni, thuriya, bana, gamkharu, muthikharu, jethipoti*, to name a few.

In Nagaland, different tribes make necklaces, earrings, bracelets and bangles out of beads, cowrie shells, brass and other metals including old silver coins, as also of ivory and teeth of various wild animals. In Meghalaya, traditional jewellery is integral part of dance and wedding ceremonies. In Mizoram, women wear necklaces made of amber, agate, carnelian, ivory and various sorts of bead necklaces. Ornament-making is also a popular craft widely practised across communities in Arunachal Pradesh. The Nyishi, Apatani, Galo, Khamti,

Singpho, Monpa, Sherdukpen, Wancho and other communities use beads, shells, stones, wax, silver, gold, wood, clay, wild seeds, bamboo, cane and reeds, feathers, etc. to make various ornaments. These are mostly used during festivals when young people, mostly women, wear them during various dance performances.

Brass and Bell Metal

In Assam, two places-Sarthebari and Hajo are traditional centres for manufacturing various brass and bell-metal products. These include household utensils, as also ceremonial items like *sarai*, (a platter or tray) and *bhog-jara* (water vessel with a spout). They also make *bhor-taal* (large cymbals) used during prayers in the *naam-ghar* and *Satra*, while smaller cymbals are musical instruments used with *bihu* and *oja-pali* songs. Huge gongs and singing bowls manufactured in Assam go out to Buddhist monasteries in across the Himalayan region.

Pottery

Pottery, especially based on clay, is more common in the plains of Assam, Manipur and Tripura, though tribal communities in Arunachal Pradesh, Nagaland and Mizoram too manufacture a variety of pottery with their limited clay resources. In Assam, one category of potters use the wheel for making various kinds of earthen utensils, while another category work without the wheel. Such wheel-less pottery villages exist particularly in the Majuli island. There are numerous *kumar-gaons* (potter-villages) across Assam where pottery is the principal means of livelihood.

In Dhubri (western Assam), a cluster of villages has specialised in manufacturing fascinating terracotta and pottery items. While tubs, pots and pitchers are common, they also manufacture a wide range of clay toys depicting dolls, animals, and idols of gods and goddesses, which have a global attraction. Several villages in western Tripura too have a rich tradition of manufacturing various pottery products, which include toys and decorative items, apart from the earthen *diya*.

Longpi, a village in Ukhrul district of Manipur stands out with its black earthenware. The Tangkhul artisan make *chamkha* (water pot), *phampai* (cooker), *kokthi* (cup), *khoram* (water pot) and other items which boldly compete with ceramic products. In the Jaintia Hills of Meghalaya, the Larnai area excels in the blue-grey earthen pottery that is shaped by hand, without the aid of a potter's wheel.

Conclusion

However, it has to be kept in mind that most of the above-mentioned art and crafts have been facing stiff competition from machine-made products, whether manufactured elsewhere in the country or outside India. Traditional artisans are increasingly facing a tough time, especially with production cost rising every passing day, while majority customers look for low-priced items. Therefore, the first step is to preserve these traditions from becoming extinct. Secondly, there is a need to integrate the traditional technique with modern art form. Many of the art and craft products produced traditionally can be promoted as souvenirs, decorative items and collector's items alongside tourism, the greenest and most environment-friendly industry. The Prime Minister's clarion call for India to become A*atmaNirbhar* can probably also focus on the traditional art and crafts sector of the North-eastern region, so that such a rich heritage does not get wiped away due to so-called modernisation.

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MSME – A Powerful Engine of India's Economic growth

Dr Sriparna B. Baruah

MSME sector is next to agriculture in terms of providing employment. It accounts for 48 percent of Indian exports. With strong and complex backward and forward linkages, the sector provides essential support to large enterprises and their value chain. Its role is instrumental in the making of AatmaNirbhar Bharat. Owing to the strong government support and the resilience shown by MSMEs, the sector has been able to take off, scripting a revival story. However, amidst the economy being in technical recession, the sector still needs a much stronger policy thrust to maximise its potential.

With COVID-19 being one of the most disruptive health challenges in recent history, India is making all efforts in navigating the complex odyssey with great agility, flexibility, sensitivity and tenacity. It is aiming to discover possibilities for spurring inclusive, equitable growth, and to discover new value chains that would make the country self reliant. The 'AatmaNirbhar Bharat Abhiyan' is a mission to galvanise the forces of growth across the country in various sectors of the economy. It is a launch pad for fostering entrepreneurship, nurturing innovation and creation of an eco-system for rural–urban symbiotic development. The challenges imposed by the disruption in the global supply chain can be converted into an opportunity. Along with this, the banning of 59 Chinese apps is an opportunity for start-ups to capitalise. In fact, the COVID-19 pandemic has built up the spirit of self reliance and it is now evident that from zero production of Personal Protection Equipment (PPE) before March 2020, India today has created a capacity of producing 2 lakh PPE kits daily and this is also growing steadily. The entire thrust on taking up challenges and uncovering opportunities will be based on the five pillars of 'AatmaNirbhar Bharat' which includes economy, infrastructure, systems, vibrant demography and demand.

The crisis has begun and will continue to force us to think innovatively. We have to decide for ourselves whether the pandemic is an unmitigated disaster or whether we can make best use of the opportunities that will come in its wake. In every crisis, there is hope for a solution and this is the time for renewed focus on the Make in India initiative. History has shown that great companies

emerge during crisis. Companies like Airbnb and Slack were founded during the peak of financial crisis of 2008.

The MSME sector accounts for 29 percent of Indian GDP and employs 11 crore people in its 6.3 crore enterprises. However, hit by COVID-19 and its aftermath, the MSME sector had an adverse impact in 2020, facing a strong contraction in revenue. The sector suffered the most in ensuring business continuity, challenged by severe liquidity crunch and dipping demand. Apart from initial relief package to MSME during COVID-19 crisis, the Union Budget 2021-22 brought relief to the capital starved MSME's with government infusing Rs. 15,700 crore for the sector. The decision to incentivise the incorporation of One Person Companies (OPCs) in the budget will feed the MSME eco-system. Also, by redefining MSME's, the Central Government and the ministry of MSME have brought in a large number of micro and small units under the sector, benefitting them with measures, schemes and concessions. The government has already initiated numerous measures under Aatmanirbhar Bharat Abhiyan.

The measures include Rs. 20,000 crore subordinate debt for MSMEs and Rs. 50,000 crore equity infusion through MSME fund of funds. MSME's also benefitted from Rs. 3 lakh crore Emergency Credit Line Guarantee scheme (ECLGS). With a cumulative of Rs. 2.9 lakh crore loan already being sanctioned as of January 29th, 2021, the collateral free automatic loan for businesses has been a major support to the sector. The rationalisation of taxes and duties (for various products from steel and alloys to garments and leather) favours domestic manufacturers and will further boost the sector.

The Indian MSME sector has been hit by COVID-19 pandemic, with millions of businesses across different sectors seeing extensive economic devastation. The sector has challenges such as delayed payments, over dependence on few customers and lack of skilled workforce. The pandemic has broken MSME's back and the biggest challenge is now survival.

Looking at the sector wise impact of COVID-19 pandemic, it is seen that:

- The Textile and Apparel sector, which provides 45 million direct employment and contributes two percent of GDP, the demand shocks are expected to hurt the Indian Textile exports and employment will be impacted because of limited demand.
- The Auto and auto components sector which provides 40 million employment and contributes 7.1 percent of GDP, will be significantly impact people's purchasing power.
- The Aviation and Tourism sector, which provides 42.7 million employment and contributes 2.4 percent of GDP, is amongst the first sectors to be hit. The tourism and the hospitality sector will see a huge job loss.
- The real estate sector is one of the biggest employment generator in the country and has a multiplier effect on around 250 allied industries. Housing is expected to have a muted demand and significant reduction in new launches.
- The consumer, retail and Internet business, which contributes 10 percent of the GDP and provides 8 percent employment, will see an immediate uptick due to hoarding of essentials; however, the retailers need to be wary of the supply chain disruptions
- The Education and Skilling sector has a market size of $101.1 billion dollars. The sluggish human resource requirement is likely to increase unemployment and even after the operations resume, there will be issues relating to sustainability of MSMEs, thus leading to large number of layoffs. It will be important to introduce basic healthcare e-learning courses in order to meet the requirement of healthcare professionals
- The Food and Agri sector which contributes to 16.5 percent of GDP and provides 43 percent of the total employment, the impact is likely to be low on both primary agricultural produce and usage of agri inputs like seeds, pesticides and fertilisers. However, all good exports to major economies will grapple for the next six months
- The Transport and Logistics sector which contributes 14 percent of GDP and provides employment to 8.27 million people, will see a medium impact. However, reduced demand for logistics due to reduced production across all sectors will put a downward pressure across

In this context, it is pertinent to mention that there are some certain sectors as mentioned below which are throwing open great opportunities for the entrepreneurs in the current context.

Health and Wellness

With a worldwide emergency in play, it's a huge opportunity for the health and wellness sector to place itself as a necessity among the users. There is immense possibility today in the Indian Healthcare industry. The healthcare industry has three major problems-affordability, reach and trust. Due to poor healthcare infrastructure, and low doctor patient ratio, not everyone has access to healthcare facilities in the country. If doctors cannot reach patients physically, technology is the best way to solve the issue of virtual consultations. Understanding the needs, a number of start-ups have come up using Pandemic as an opportunity. Few examples include, Bengaluru based start-up Biodesign Innovation Labs, which has come up with a portable ventilator; and Hyderabad based Aerobiosys Innovations has come up with an IOT

enabled ventilation system 'JEEVAN Lite. It is a low cost portable ventilator which can be used during power cuts also. There are also many other start-ups which has come up with solutions using AI to address various issues like misinforrmation around Coronavirus. Along with start-ups, Indian car maker Maruti had announced that it is teaming up with AGVA to manufacture ventilators. The list goes on and is an indication that India should compete where its strengths lies—innovation at lower cost, basically frugal innovation as we Indians call *'Jugaad'*.

Digital Education

This sector is experiencing a new growth during this period. Starting from online teaching platforms to assessment of assignments and online exams, the list goes on. The pandemic has made it essential for educators and learners to adopt more efficient digital processes and tools. As the economy normalises, the disruptions and innovations coming to the fore during this phase will become key industry growth drivers in future. Companies like BYJU's, Whitechat Jr, Unacademy, Toppr, Vedanta, etc. have gained up to a three times surge in usage since the first phase of lockdown.

E-Commerce and Delivery Based Services

With lockdown imposed and social distancing being the new-normal for the up-coming months if not years, and people refraining from gathering up at markets, grocery stores and public places; the E-Commerce and Delivery based sectors are booming. Given the advent of technological revolution and interface management systems, the industry was already on a growth trajectory and the recent turn of events have further catalysed the entire game to unprecedented levels. People who refrained from using online ordered utilities, services and commodities, are now adapting to procure their daily needs e-commerce and delivery based services. India's online grocers, Big Basket and Grofers, have nearly doubled the number of daily deliveries and both are expected to hire new workforce to meet the increasing demand. In fact, E-retail including online grocery will be a sunrise sector in the long term even after COVID-19 chapter comes to a close.

OTT platforms and Online Gaming

With cinema halls facing closure, movies are being released online through partnerships with media streaming applications. The OTT platforms and online gaming has surfaced above the conventional ways of entertainment. Soon enough, those who were not accustomed to them would get habituated and the need for heading out to garner some entertainment, would be replaced. These platforms have proven to be time and cost efficient, providing a more personalised version of the same experience, and at the comfort of home.

Alternative Medicine

Self care industry has seen growth during pandemic, and consumption of motivational contents, exercises, healthy diets, mind management, etc., has increased exponentially. COVID-19 has become a wakeup call for people. Immunity will be the buzzword in the post COVID-19 era and the industry that has benefitted the most is that of alternative medicine. Ayurveda market is continuously growing and along with that there is growing market for healthy snacks.

The Road Ahead

It is time for Indian businesses to transform and take a positive approach towards investment for building 'AatmaNirbhar Bharat'. Entrepreneurs need to take advantage of the opportunity thrown up by COVID-19 crisis. Those with lower leverage should shy away from making fresh and bold investment in the new strategic sectors. As far as government is concerned, along with facilitating entrepreneurs to capitalise on opportunities, it is imperative that government increases investment in the social sector including healthcare, education, environment and rural infrastructure. There is need to look at sustaining demand and the government should plan to push demand through another stimulus down the road.

Banning 59 Chinese apps is a significant statement of intent. India must significantly embark on its journey of self–reliance and start with three missions- solar and battery energy, consumer electronics and Artificial Intelligence. At this point, India needs to invest in the future, moving from imitation to innovation. For long, Indian companies

be it pharmaceuticals, automobiles or IT services have enjoyed imitation. It is pertinent to note that India's Research and Development spending is 0.6 percent of GDP, whereas for China it is 2.1 percent and South Korea 4.55 percent. Situation in the corporate is also not different. Incentivising innovation over imitation and emphasising on design, engineering and manufacturing at scale is needed.

Owing to the strong government support and the resilience shown by MSMEs, the sector has been able to take off, scripting a revival story. However, amidst the economy being in technical recession, the sector still needs a much stronger policy thrust to maximise its potential. The sector will benefit if a considerate view is taken and changes happen, making credit and capital easily accessible to MSMEs. The lending eco-system, therefore, needs to be eased and strengthened by leveraging digital technologies for seamless lending process and for assessing credit risk of potential borrowers. Other policy changes that need to be taken up include

1) Incentivising digital adoption within the sector
2) Promoting digital literacy
3) Addressing skilling challenges
4) Reducing GST
5) Easing various licencing and compliance regulation
6) Making interventions that would guide the sector to wider markets, through e-commerce

MSME sector is next to agriculture in terms of providing employment. It accounts for 48 percent of Indian exports. With strong and complex backward and forward linkages, the sector provides essential support to large enterprises and their value chain. In the making of AatmaNirbhar Bharat, its role is instrumental. One fifth of these MSMEs are based in rural areas. This also indicates the role they play in promoting sustainable and inclusive development and generating large scale employment in rural areas.

It is important that the Ministry of MSME draws up a policy framework with multiple scenarios on how to continue business operations commensurate with the spread of the virus. The proposed policy framework, could consider the following.

- Wage support or subsidy package could be made available to employers to pay salaries and other statutory dues specially to the contractual /daily wage workers
- It will be crucial that the self employed MSME units be given a salary net needed to navigate the crisis. There may be room to compensate (subject to a cap) self employed businesses who can prove a decrease in turnover.
- Treatment of commercial electricity, water and other utility bills could be examined specifically in the scenario where lockdown has been further extended. It will be extremely beneficial for units to be offered deferment or be required to pay property tax, rent and other utilities in order to avoid further costs and liquidity shortfalls, since payment of personal salaries should be a priority for enterprise owners.

COVID-19 is a crisis with an unforeseeable ending. What is clear though is that the government and businesses—both large and small, will have to work together to ensure the protection of workers, be ready for risk management in terms of phased re-starting of business operations and be prepared to open structural changes in business activity. Newer solutions will be the need of the hour that may not have been foreseen as yet. Post this pandemic, the business scenario will be completely changed and every sector will have to be looked at in a different way for sustainability.

For MSMEs to recover from the COVID-19 crisis and identify opportunities, they need to:

- Embrace technology and digitisation
- Change mindset and focus on business innovation
- Monitor labour productivity on a daily basis
- Think of strategies that can revive revenues of the businesses within a short span of time. Launching an e-commerce vertical is a good example
- Business needs to be more agile and come up with crisis management strategies
- Focus on three factors
    - Managing short term disruptions
    - Catering to medium term needs

Highlights of Budget 2021-22 for MSME Sector
Rs 15,700 crore to be provided to the MSME sector-more than double of BE for 2020-21
Conciliation Mechanism to be set up for the quick resolution of contractual disputes with Govt or CPSEs
To ensure faster resolution of cases, a special framework for MSMEs shall be introduced

- Planning for long term changes

- Building resilient and local supply chain
- Digitising supply chain completely
- Divesting unprofitable verticals of business
- Sticking to core and focussing on strengthening it

MSMEs not only play a crucial role in providing large employment opportunities at a comparatively lower capital cost than large industries but also help industrialisation of backward areas. They also help in reducing regional imbalances, assuring equitable distribution of national income and wealth. MSMEs are complementary to large industries as ancillary units and this sector contributes enormously to the socio-economic development of the country.

The Ministry of Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises (MSMEs) adopted the cluster approach as a key strategy for enhancing the productivity and competitiveness as well as capacity building of small enterprises (including small scale industries and small scale service and business entities) and their collectives in the country. Among other things, this approach was preferred as it facilitates economies of scale in terms of deployment of available resources for effective implementation and leads to sustainable results in the medium to long term.

While the role of MSMEs is often highlighted in the context of their contribution to employment, economic growth and balanced regional development, it is important that these enterprises are sustainable and can deliver at scale. Even though contributing significantly to exports, Indian MSMEs are still not regarded as a force to reckon with in the international markets. Looking ahead, the challenges are in building the next generation of MSMEs that can function as power houses of the economy. With intense competition at global level and the demands arising from globalisation, it is imperative for MSMEs to demonstrate greater competitiveness, position themselves strategically and leverage their engagements in global value chains.

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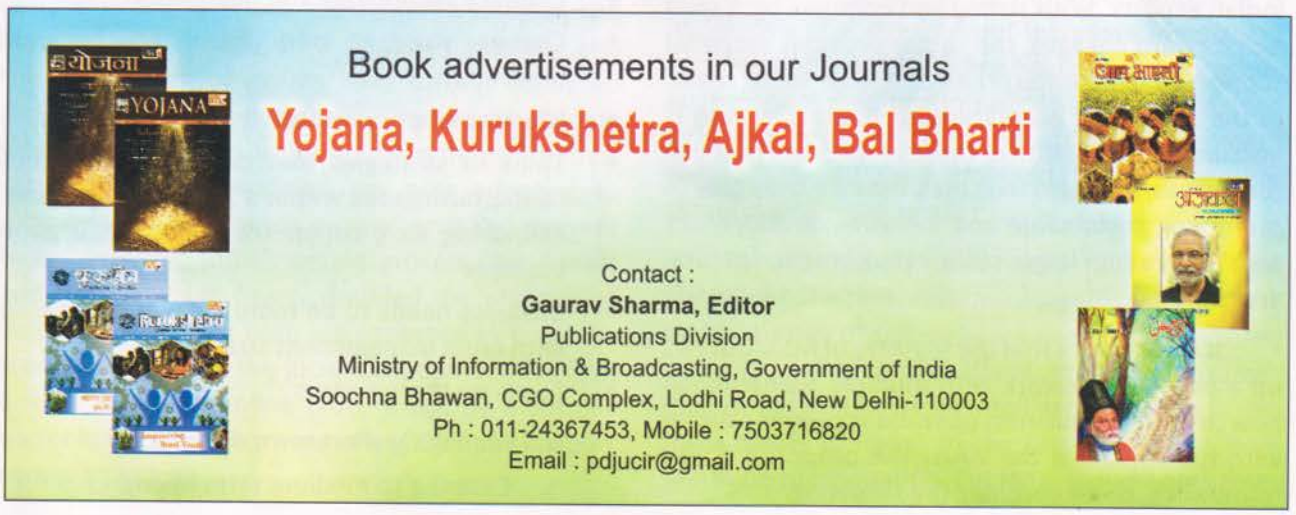
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Warlis: Life Around Nature

Dr. Shashi A Mishra

The Warli culture revolves around the segments of nature. The Warli culture includes expressing social and cultural aspects through painting on mud wall of their house that depicts their daily social setting. These paintings also include their folk ideas, images and impressions which seem to be inspired by nature. Warlis have learnt their traditional skills of painting, discipline, company of nature, informal community setting and socio- cultural life through their ancestors which has been passed down to them in form of stories and folks.

India has one of the largest tribal populations in the world. In India, all states except a few, have tribal population. Our country has a rich tradition of folk art which originates from tribes in different parts of India. Tribals are often called as the kings of forests or the sons of forests. In simple language tribals are those people who are close to nature and are mainly dependent on nature for their day-to-day needs. They are nomadic in nature and live-in isolation. They mostly live-in groups and interact with each other in their own language.

Late Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru, the first Prime Minister of India once said that he would prefer to be nomad in the hills. According to him, the tribals are more disciplined and simpler in expression.

In the North Sahyadri mountain range of Maharashtra lives the Adivasi tribe by the name of Warlis. The word 'warli' originates from the word 'waral' which means a piece of land. It is a belief that the jungles, where they made their homes after cutting down the branches of the trees, gave them land to live and cultivate. This space came to be known as Waral, and since they resided there, they took the name of warli. Warlis are considered as one of the most significant tribes of Maharashtra as they share one of the most unique relationship which makes them different in comparison with other tribes of Maharashtra.

The Warlis daily social settings show a close relationship with the nature which is reflected in their art, communicated through their paintings on the wall in the form of story and happenings of their daily life. Warlis are an aboriginal tribe living in the foothills of the Sahyadri in the forest. They were hunters and food gatherers living in the forest. With time they were forced to settle down at the base of the hills and so they adopted an agro pastoral life style. Even after the Britishers came to India, many changes in their lifestyle were seen.

The Warlis are mainly found in Thane, Palghar, Mokhada, Talasari, Vikramgad, Vada, Jawahar, Dahanu, Cosbad, Nashik and Dhule districts in Maharashtra; Valsad district in Gujarat; and the Union Territories of Dadra and Nagar Haveli and Daman and Diu. Warlis worship nature and hence believe in peaceful and sustainable co-existence depicted in their art. Warlis speak an unwritten Warli language. Marathi, Gujarati, Sanskrit and an Indo-Aryan dialect (mix of Khandeshi Bhilli and Marathi) are the languages widely used for communication. Their main occupation is agriculture and allied activities. The Warlis worship the earth and refer to it as mother goddess as they grow crops on this ground for survival. They cultivate, gather and grow a single crop for subsistence and also gather forest produce in form of fruits and herbs.

The Warlis daily social settings show a close relationship with the nature which is reflected in their art, communicated through their paintings on the wall in the form of story and happenings of their daily life. Warlis are an aboriginal tribe living in the foothills of the Sahyadri in the forest.

Farming is their main occupation and also a way of life for them. Warlis life revolves around forest and forest products. Bamboo which is available from forest are used by warlis to make baskets, mats to meet their basic necessities at home. They also collect seasonal fruits like bore, peru, oranges, chikku from the forest and sell it in the nearest local market. Warli women pluck flowers from the forest and use it at the time of festivals and celebrations. Their respect for land is so high that they make wooden sculpture of ancestors in the farms where they do the farming.

They are seen as a self-sufficient community who make the best of everything they get from nature. This makes them highly dependent on nature and natural products. The warlis are non- vegetarians. Fish is a staple food in warli community. They consume meat of deer, goat, wild rabbits, and pigeons. Rotis are made up of nagli, wheat, jowar and rice. Leafy vegetables are very popular among tribal community of warlis. The oils used by the warlis are very often either palmolein or groundnut oils for cooking. At the time of festivals, harvest time and celebrations among warlis, use of tadi is very common and it is consumed by everyone. Tadi is prepared from Mahua which they use for their own consumption and supply it to others also during the time of celebrations. Generally, they don't make tea as the domestication of cow and buffalo is not available. This makes them highly dependent on nature and natural products.

There has been observed a habit of smoking bidi in the warli community. Bidi is made of Asitra (timroo) leaves. Majority of tribal are habituated to bidi so they keep asitra leaves in their pockets and they just roll it and consume when they feel like smoking. During the time of celebration, food is served on pattal (Plate made up of Sal Leaves). They use Pattal, which are plates prepared by stitching with fine, thin pointed bamboo stick of 6 or 8 leaves, for eating food. For drinking their traditional tadi, they will roll up a single Sal leaf like a cone and use it for drinking tadi. Any celebration of the tribal is incomplete without Tadi distribution.

Warlis enjoy and celebrate their comfortable and ethnic clothing. Normally, men wear a thin loin cloth and a turban, while women gracefully drape colourful knee-length saris. On certain occasions, women glam up by wearing their hair in stylish and beautiful ways.

Warlis hold a very strong respect for their spirits and deities. For the warlis, Bhagat, is their guru. They believe in tantra, mantra and in re-birth. In their culture, they cremate the bodies and, in this procedure to perform rituals, the Bhagat plays a crucial role. The warli also worship the village god and strongly believe in customs and traditions. They worship gods chiefly to avoid their anger. They believe in Jaldevta, Van devta and Vaayudevta. They feel that if someone dies at a young age then that is due to the curse of these Gods. They are well known to have a faith in Tiger God (Vaghai). As they acknowledge waghoba and worship its role in balancing the food chain. They consider the tiger as a symbol of life and regeneration. They do not have well-built temples, but have carved wooden statues of tigers for worship.

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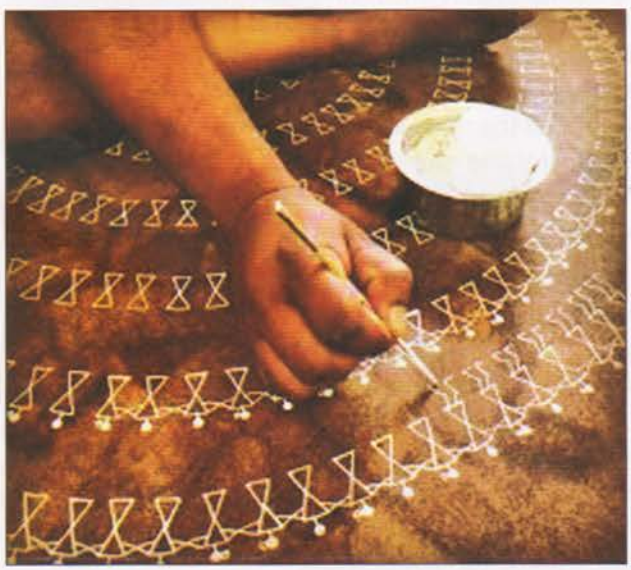
The most crucial form of art is the Warli paintings. There are no records of the exact origin of this art but its roots can be traced to the early 10th century AD. Their paintings reflect their beliefs and traditions. Homes of warlis have muddy walls and doors which are painted at the time of



marriage, birth of children and new harvest. They use fine powder of Geru known as lalmati and mix it with water to form liquid color that makes muddy wall their canvas. Bamboo stick crushed at end to form as brush. The Warlis use only white colour for their paintings. The white colours are made using a mixture of rice dough and natural glues which are obtained from trees. In Warli painting, usage of basic geometric shapes like triangles, circles, squares and lines are used to add effect and beauty. All these shapes are influenced by the nature. The triangle often symbolises hills and pointed trees. The circles symbolise sun and moon god. The squares symbolise chowks. Chowks are mainly used in marriage related paintings and it holds a significant value in marriage. Inside the chowk, they paint their mother goddess-Palghata, symbolising fertility. While preparing Chowk, warlisuhasinis (the married women) celebrate by singing songs in chorus. 'Lagnacha Chauk', meaning marriage paintings, are sacred and without them marriage cannot take place.

Warli women wear toe-rings and necklaces as a sign of being married. By doing this, they attempt to invite all the gods and goddesses of their tribe to attend their family wedding to bless and protect the couple from the evil spirit.

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The paintings highlight the struggles of their daily life. Activities of hunting, fishing, farming, festivals, dances, trees, snakes, ants and animals are depicted in their paintings. The warli painting show the simple lives of the people in the region. They live peacefully with their animals and give equal significance to its every aspect in their painting. The paintings have no words yet tell stories through shapes which are used to draw human beings and animals. Different shapes are used to tell different stories. Huts and trees are a prominent feature of their paintings.

Dance is a very important part of the warli culture. The Tarpa (instrument) dance, is one of the most famous dance forms. The custom is that musician has to make his own instrument and so the instrument used while playing should not be made by others or outsiders. Therefore, every tarpa instrument is important.

When the tarpa is played, the warlis gather and dance together on rhythm of tarpa. As the rhythm changes, so does their dance steps. Everyone dances, together in a semi-circle, facing toward the tarpa musician with their hands on the other persons shoulder or waist. The tarpa dance begins during the day and goes on for the entire night. To the Warlis, tarpa symbolises the continuity of life. The warlis sing songs to worship nature, especially the sun and moon. In these songs they praise their ancestors. This dance form is very important as warlis forget their hunger, illness or sadness, and indulge into these dances. Tarpa dance is usually performed on events that call for celebrations like diwali, wedding and harvest, in order to thank the nature. Along with Tarpa dance, Dhol dance, Gauri dance are important.

The warli painting depicts life and culture of warli community. Today, warli painters are famous throughout the world. Warli paintings, which were first made by women to communicate their daily social life situations, is now even done by men. In 1970 when Jivya Soma Mashe, started painting the daily life of warlis, the Government of India gave him the Master Craftsmen status. Stick figure art, which warli women used to paint on their walls during marriages for good luck, was shifted to paper and canvas by men, thus, giving it a new pathway. Due to this, warli painting is now a new source of income for the warli community.

In contemporary times, warli painting have also started depicting radios, cycles and double decker buses. Warli painting is also seen in major five-star hotels, firms, in trending fashion and many other places. There is also new creativity seen in warli art, which can be used in entrepreneurial areas, which can help the warli community gain the acknowledgment that they deserve.

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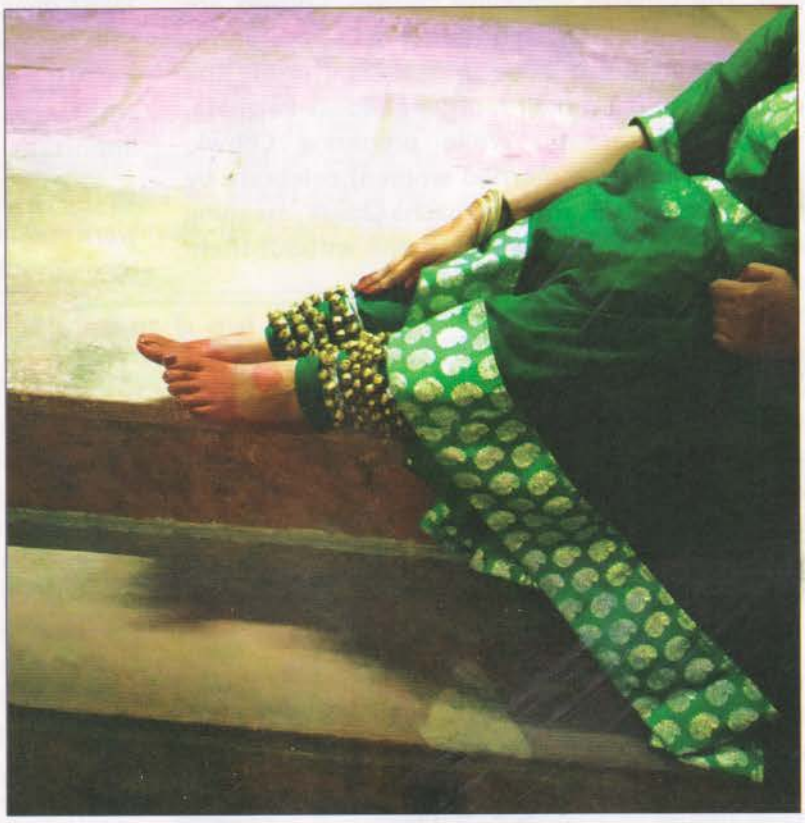
Understanding Indian Classical Dance

Dr. Neha Gupta

Classical dance started out in the form of worship in temples, then in the kingdoms of Mughal Empire, and this even gained acceptance (since 18th-19th centuries) at international level in the field of 'Art and Culture'. Indian classical dances are broadly represented in two formats. One is Tandava, which is said to be originated by Lord Shiva (believed to be originator of dance and mudras as 'Nataraja'), and includes fast movements of body parts to show aggression, courage, etc. Another is Lasya, which displays grace, love, beauty, gentleness (it is believed to be originated by Goddess Parvati), and is mostly performed by females. This article advocates the importance of Dance in our life, but with deep focus on Indian Classical Dances – these not only reflect our traditions and cultures, but also offer immense therapeutic benefits for our mind, body and soul.

Who has not been aware about the term 'Dance' – commonly perceived as the movement of body parts (hands, legs, waist, torso, along with movement of facial muscles and of sensory organs namely eyes) in a certain rhythm, based on the music, which entices 'feel good' factor to the dancer as well as to the viewers/ audience. Broadly, dance has two main categorisation which are Western and Classical. While the latter has roots connected to Indian traditions, the Western Dance encompasses varied forms, originally from Western countries like the US, such as hip-hop, contemporary, jazz, ballet, etc. Overall, dance helps to keep our body in perfect shape, as it is equivalent to exercising, doing aerobics or yoga, and promotes fitness and flexibility, as well as allows us to connect with different societies.



In India, nowadays, there has been an increasing trend and liking among people for western style of dancing, compared to Indian classical dance. The same is evident from the popularity of western dance or music in Bollywood movies and in parties/functions. This is also related to a common belief that classical dances are to be performed only by few people, as these are technically difficult to learn and practice, and can be unexciting due to use of raga-based classical music and owing to need to wear traditional outfits, unlike western dances which can be performed in any modern dress. However, this is not entirely correct for those who understand the rationale behind learning and performing of classical dances to comprehend their physical, mental, emotional and spiritual benefits. The Article is meant to clarify foundations of Indian classical dance.

Classical dance started out in the form of worship in temples, then in the kingdoms of Mughal Empire, and this even gained acceptance (since 18th-19th centuries) at international level in the field of 'Art and Culture'. This involve strict techniques and rules relating to body movements, *bhava* (expressions), costumes, hand and leg postures, etc., and its earliest evidence can be

traced in Bharata Muni's *Nāṭya Śāstra* (believed to be written prior to 200 C.E.).

Indian classical dances are broadly represented in two formats. One is *Tandava,* which is said to be originated by Lord Shiva (believed to be originator of dance and mudras as 'Nataraja'), and includes fast movements of body parts to show aggression, courage, etc. Another is *Lasya,* which displays grace, love, beauty, gentleness (it is believed to be originated by Goddess Parvati), and is mostly performed by females. In fact, performance or *Abhinaya* in this Art form is divided into three parts: *Natya*, referring to imitation of a story; *Nritta*, implying actual dance movements; and *Nritya*, depicting usage of facial and hand gestures/motions.

Interestingly, classical dances have a deep-rooted devotional Guru-Shishya Parampara, involving blessings of Goddess Saraswati. *Ghungroos* or ankle bells are worn by the dancers as the pre-requisite, and are considered auspicious instruments that enable the dancers to perform as per the *Taal/Tala* (rhythm consisting of beats/matras) and *Laya* (tempo of rhythm) in Hindustani music. These assist the audience to easily understand the complicated footwork done by the classical dancers.

Bharatanatyam, as one of the most famous Indian classical dances, belongs to the State of Tamil Nadu and has one of the toughest leg postures (Mandala), i.e. *Aramandi*, where heels are put together, while toes point outwards and the knees remain bent in half-squat position. This is famous as *Ekaharya*, where a single dancer performs many characters. Kathak is a popular dance form of North India and has three Gharanas: Lucknow, Jaipur and Banaras. This involves telling a story through expressions, and footwork (*Tatkar*) and spins (*Chakkar*). Kathakali is from Kerala with a perfect blend of dance, music, drama, expressions, and the costumes which are huge and enchanting as they involve green colour *Paccha* make-up on face, *Kirita* (big golden headgear) and a long bellowing cushion-padded skirt. In contrast, Mohiniattam dance, which is also from Kerala, is more subtle with delicate movements of body parts and is generally performed solo by woman (known as dance by the enchantress). Manipuri dance from Manipur has more devotional form and is based on Radha-Krishan's Raslila. Odissi is one of the ancient dances which depicts archeological culture of Odisha and has circular movement of legs. *Tribhaṅga* is its main standing posture in which body bends at three levels: knees in one direction and hips/waist in second; and shoulders/neck in other form. Kuchipudi dance belongs to the State of Andhra Pradesh and has fast foot movements with dramatic expressions and dialogues. It is also performed on the edge of a brass plate (known as *Tarangam*) on the beats of Carnatic music.

Classical dances are, however, different from folk dances which lack strict rules. Latter have been created based on narrative of the region, based on how people live there, communicate with each other, enjoy festivals as per the seasons and agricultural harvest of the State/region, etc. These include Bhangra from Punjab, Ghoomar from Rajasthan, Lavani from Maharashtra, Bihu from Assam, Garba from Gujarat, Chhau from West Bengal and Odisha, Bacha Nagma and Rouf from Jammu and Kashmir, etc.

The Article now describes various benefits of Indian Classical Dance.

Helps in Proper Acupressure Treatment

Indian classical dances involve immense footwork whose pace differs as per the dance, viz. Kathak's Jaipur Gharana includes fast footwork and spins. These are done barefoot. So when feet are skillfully put on the ground, several acupressure points are naturally pressed. It is widely known that feet have the maximum number of points, which can heal our body and relax our mind. Research shows that classical dance acts as a natural acupressure remedy without going to a therapist. This helps to banish tension and pain in the body, heals organs of the body such as kidney and heart, resolves constipation, regulates blood pressure and diabetes, cures arthritis, and stimulates better coordination of neuro-motor skills[1].

Enables Free Expression of Creativity and Loving All Our Emotions

Undoubtedly, regular dancing enhances our creative skills–this holds a special place in case of classical dances, where one needs to Act also while dancing. That is, classical dance is a performing Art, which involves innovative communication of emotions and feelings, depending on the wish/ mood of a performer.

Secondly, all types of the emotions have to be demonstrated, for example, aggression or passion, if it is the Tandav dance; love or affection if performing the dance of Radha-Krishna; sadness if the story/song is related to Viraha (separation); and so on. Thus, one is able to see the beauty of all the emotions, without being overly attached to anyone.

Predominantly, there are nine *Rasas* in classical dance based on different emotions: Hasya (Laughter), Shringar (Love, Beauty), Raudra (Anger), Veera (Bravery, Fearlessness), Bibhatsa (Disgust, Hate), Bhayanaka (Fearful), Karuna (Compassion, Sorrow), Adbhuta (Wonder, Surprise), and Shanta (Peacefulness). These emotions are experienced at the mind level by a dancer and are spread to the audience through facial expressions called as Bhava.

While acting out all these Rasas in a subtle way through Abhinaya, the dancers become the observers, who no longer resist eruption of any kind of emotion, be it anger, sadness, etc. In fact, the feeling of unconditional love and empathy towards each emotion is naturally generated, as most of the base of classical dance is Devotion and Surrender to God or Higher Power. Spiritual growth is also thus stimulated without sacrificing joy and bliss in our day-to-day routine life.

Bestows on us Yogic Benefits of Different Hand Mudras as well as Connects us with Nature

All Classical dances use hand mudras or *Hastak* to truly denote or express storyline, characters or emotions or meaning of song to the audience. Mudras in simpler terms are the gestures done by hand, and their reference is generally obtained from *Abhinaya Darpana by Nandikeśvara*[2]. "Asamyutta" Mudras are done with one hand and are primarily 28 as per this ancient text, i.e., 'Pataka, Tripataka, Ardha-pataka, Kartari-mukha, Mayura, Ardha-Candra, Arala, Suka-tundaka, Musti, Sikhara, Kapittha, Kataka-mukha, Suci, Candra-kala, (Padma-) Kosa, Sarpa-sirsa, Mrga-sirsa, Simha-mukha, Langula, Sola-padma, Catura, Bhramara, Hamsasya, Hamsa-paksa, Samdamsa, Mukula, Tamracuda, and Trisula'. Each Mudra signifies some animal, scene of nature, etc. For instance, *Pataka* refers to cloud, river, horse, forest, night, etc. and in this mudra, all the fingers are held closely yet straight, while the thumb bends. *Mayura* refers to peacock, where tips of ring finger and thumb touch each other. *Ardhachandra* displays half-moon, meditation pose, etc. and it is similar to Pataka but the thumb is stretched outside. Conversely, using both the hands, there are mostly 24 "Samyutta" Mudras, i.e., 'Anjali, Kapota, Karkata, Svastika, Dola, Puspaputa, Utsanga, Siva-linga, Kataka-vardhana, Kartari-svastika, Sakata, Sankha, Cakra, Samputa, Pasa, Kilaka, Matsya, Kurma, Varaha, Garuda, Naga-bandha, Khatva, Bherunda, and Avahittha' to mark auspicious symbols, devotion to deity, convey messages, along with depiction of nature, birds, etc. Illustratively, *Anjali* is to offer salutation to God and Guru (hands in Namaste form). *Kartari-svastika* signifies trees, hills, etc. - hands are crossed where each one remains in *Kartarimukha mudra* (representing scissors, when index and middle fingers are stretched, whereas little and ring fingers bend to touch the tip of thumb). *Garuda*

refers to the eagle or vehicle of Lord Vishnu (when both hands are in Ardhachandra mudras and are placed over each other by interlocking thumbs). When dancers do Rasa-Abhinaya, they express stories for movement of birds, rivers, running of animals like deer, plucking of flowers and making garland, smelling the flower, etc. using mudras.

What other purpose do Mudras serve? Each finger represents five elements of Nature: Air/Vayu (Index finger), Space/Akash (Middle Finger), Earth/Bhumi (Ring Finger), Water/Jal (Little Finger), and Fire/Agni (Thumb). In yoga, when their tips are touched (thereby forming special mudras), then energy is generated and blood flow is improved, thereby benefiting the entire body and balancing Pancha Mahatattvas. *Classical dance also becomes a yogic practice with use of all its Mudras.* For instance, Kartarimukha Mudra is similar to yoga's Prana Mudra which removes fatigue and heals deficiency of vitamins. Jnana/Gyan Mudra (where tip of index finger is firmly pressed with thumb tip to aid in better memory and insomnia) is similar to Hamsasya Mudra, representing Swan in dance. Apana Mudra (where tips of two centered fingers are touched with tip of the thumb) is immensely useful in curing constipation, diabetes, piles, etc. and resembles Simha-mukha Mudra (lion's face). Mayura Mudra is like Prithvi Mudra which heals earth element, helps in growth of hair, improves skin complexion, and boosts confidence. It may be challenging to perform yoga mudras daily, but these become pious and exciting when done with classical dances.

Helps in Perfect Alignment of Body and Keeps us Physically Healthy

All dances keep the body's weight under control, but classical dance makes us more mentally and physically active and healthy, and helps to maintain alignment in the body, as many dance steps have to be done in a certain posture only viz. Bharatanatyam involves performance in a bending position. Kuchipudi uses brass plates and Kathakali has heavy costumes while dancing. This way, one gets to learn the art of balancing.

With regular practice of classical dance, our thighs and arms are toned up, due to immense exercising of muscles, thereby imparting proper flexibility and strength. As one holds Mudras, the breathing, our life force, also gets controlled and balanced. Further, our entire system cools down when we dance due to sweating.

Note that "the basic or standing position (Sthanak) of Kathak is in itself an 'Asana'. It involves straight alignment of spine and neck as well as pressure on both the hands right from arms which can be used in the treatments of paralysis, spondylitis."[3] In fact, it is asserted that classical dancers are blessed with better cardiovascular stamina.

However, it is often alleged that classical dancers tend to gain weight later in life – well, it can be true even for any sports person or any active person who suddenly stops playing or working. Thus, it is said that never stop Riyas/practice at any stage of life.

Promotes Better Coordination of Left and Right side of Brain

In classical dances, there are simultaneous focused yet slower movements of hands, limbs, face, head, feet, etc. which are required to perform different actions at the same time. This factor leads to greater coordination and connection between both sides of the brain, thereby activating the mid-brain - which helps to release happiness hormone, stimulates proper functioning of visual and audio processing, and gives us motivation in life, and supports us in advancing our intuition echelons.

In fact, as classical dance contains narration of a story with expression of emotions of both male and female, this helps in balancing feminine and masculine qualities. Interestingly, left side of the brain has masculine energy with more logical and action-oriented thinking, whereas right side of the brain has more feminine energy with creativity, feelings of love and nurturing. Balancing of these two energies is the essential condition to live a better life as a human being.

Fills us with Natural and Life-supporting Vitamins – Vitamin D^2, Vitamin P^2; and Provides Benefits of 'Living in the Present Moment'

Vitamin D^2 refers to regular dosage of Discipline and Dedication, and Vitamin P^2 refers to Patience and Perseverance. To explain, one needs to hold a particular posture or mudra for a longer

duration, and the option is not easily available to the classical dancers to quickly shift from one step into another. This automatically stops monkey-mind from wandering and keeps them focused to live in that moment, as then higher concentration level needs to be attained so that one can stay in a position as long as required. This way, the patience level also rises.

Secondly, everyday a certain number of hours of practice is required, both within the class with the teacher, and beyond the class session so as to learn and understand each Taal (rhythmic pattern of properly placed beats, viz. Teen taal in Kathak has 16 beats), and correlate the steps (viz. Toda, Tukda, etc.) with each beat. That is, a high level of determination, practice and devotion has to be delivered to achieve perfection even in one mudra or posture.

Releases Good Hormones and Aids in Mental and Psychological Health

When one dances, it is equivalent to a big activity which secretes feel-good hormones like Endorphins (which is released in the brain to deal with pain and curtails stress hormone Cortisol), Dopamine as the happiness hormone and Serotonin as a mood-uplifting hormone, etc[4]. These help us to feel lighter in body and mind, and make us joyful and happy.

Research has also shown that in Kathak, mainly in Jaipur Gharana, the fast tatkar helps in relieving stress, anger and anxiety. Whereas, soft and peaceful movements in dances like Manipuri bring ease and relaxation.[5] Past wounds are also said to be healed, when any Art is practiced for a longer duration.

Overall, classical dances are one of the best ways of 'Active Meditation' that not only enables the dancers to constantly and mindfully focus on breathing and movement of different body parts, but also offer enormous support in upkeep of their mental health as classical dancing also calms down, brings in stillness and helps them to go inwards.

Improves Beauty

Classical dances especially bring natural glow on our face and remove impurities, as the dancers tend to frequently move their facial muscles and sensory organs. If you closely watch the classical dancers, most of them have glowing and healthy skin. They express Rasas through movement of eyes, lips, etc. As a result, the muscles and tissues of face, and of eyes, are strengthened - logically equivalent to face yoga, which helps to enhance proper blood flow, clear the complexion and improve skin's quality.

That said, it's a high time for Indians to give due importance to Classical dances and utilize their advantages at a length. Above mentioned benefits are broadly indicative, though much research is available to demonstrate them. Indian classical dances have innate creative formula embedded in them, which can offer a better satisfied life, without compromising natural beauty within and around us. These are one of the best ways for doing inner-work, which pandemic has also enforced upon us.

Endnotes

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Traditional Toy Industry-New India's Sunrise Sector

Dilsher Dhupia

Toys are an important part of childhood, as they aid in physiological, mental, and emotional development. The activities and control, that are required to understand and operate varying types of playthings, instil a sense of shape and colours, enhance cognitive abilities, and improve creativity. Traditional toys are also an important cultural asset as they depict ancient mythological stories and display the beliefs and traditions that exist among communities.

The history of the Indian toy industry stretches back to the birth of our nation itself. Manufactured all over the country, Indian toys reflect cultural diversity in the range of products manufactured. Local toys are manufactured from various raw materials such as plastic, wood, rubber, metals and textiles, with a big proportion of the businesses being SMEs. It is a labour-oriented industry based on master craftsmanship and creative designing.

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Handmade toys are made of simple local materials like wood, bamboo, cloth, metal sheets, wire, paper, cardboard, etc. Toymakers who live in cities and industrial areas make use of recycled waste materials such as old newspapers, discarded cartons, metal scraps, boxes and tins. Even discarded parts of machines and equipment are used very ingeniously. The use of recycled materials has no overhead cost and hence enables artisans to manufacture and sell toys at an unbelievably low price.

The Indian toy manufacturing industry is the livelihood of thousands of craftsmen and their families. This sector also plays an important role in generating employment opportunities for women and providing a regular source of income for rural households. In the toy industry, over 60 percent of toy factory workers are women.

mygov
Toys can be an excellent medium to further the spirit of 'Ek Bharat, Shreshtha Bharat'
PM Narendra Modi
#MyGovMorningMusings

The Indian toy retail market was valued at ~INR 16,000 Crore (USD 2.2 Bn) in 2020, which accounts for <1 percent of the global market. Currently, 85 percent of the domestic demand for toys is met through imports from China, Sri Lanka, Malaysia, Germany, and the US. In comparison to import volumes, India's toy exports merely stand at INR 730 Crore (USD 100 Mn). This trade deficit is alarmingly large, given the potential of India to be self-reliant in an industry that is likely to grow at 10-15 percent against the global average of 5 percent. With Hon'ble Prime Minister Narendra Modi's call for 'Vocal for Local', concerted efforts are being made to uplift the traditional toy industry in India to a global level.

To further boost the toy industry, the Government has undertaken the following initiatives:

National Action Plan-a comprehensive action plan to boost local manufacturing and incentivise toy and handicraft manufacturers in the country. The 'National Action Plan' will be implemented in collaboration with 14 Central Ministries, including

The India Toy Fair 2021
THE INDIA TOY FAIR IS GOING TO BE A MAJOR STEP IN OUR JOURNEY TOWARDS BUILDING AN AATMANIRBHAR BHARAT
PM Modi Inaugurates The India Toy Fair 2021
This first toy fair is not just a business or economic event but a link to strengthen the country's age-old culture of sports & gaiety
The chess which is so popular in the world today, was earlier played in India as 'Chaturanga or Chaduranga'; Ludo was then played as 'Pachisi
The world has done research on toys from the era of Sindhu Ghati, Mohenjo-Daro & Harappa. When travelers came to India, they used to learn sports & take it along with them
I would urge the toy manufacturers to make toys that are better for both ecology & psychology and use items that are recyclable

Education, Textiles, Railways, Science and Technology, and Information and Broadcasting.

Toy Fair - In line with the national initiative to promote the domestic toy industry, the government organised a National Toy Fair from February 27 - March 03, 2021. The toy fair aimed to provide a platform to promote traditional, eco-friendly, and indigenous toys and to boost the Indian economy by supporting the local toy industry.

Toycathon - To promote toy manufacturing among domestic players, particularly rural entrepreneurs, a Common Service Centre (CSV) and a Special Purpose Vehicle (SPV) under the Ministry of Electronics and IT, joined forces with the All India Council for Technical Education (AICTE) to organise 'Toycathon 2021'. This concept is a first-of-its-kind hackathon to develop indigenous toys and games-highlighting India's culture, history and mythology. It aims to invite students, teachers, start-ups, toy experts and professionals to innovate and submit feasibility assessments for local manufacturing of creative toys, games and concepts. With over 1.2 lakh registrants for the event and 17,000 ideas, 13,900 teams have been formed and can win a large number of prizes up to INR 50 lakh.

Toy Cluster Programme–90 percent of the Indian toy industry is unorganised, with more than 4,000 micro, small and medium enterprises operating across the country. Most toy manufacturers are in Delhi NCR, Maharashtra, Karnataka, Tamil Nadu and small clusters across other Indian states. To streamline this sector, the government announced the 'Product Specific Industrial Cluster Development Programme' in 2020 to build toy clusters in dedicated SEZs and help them become customised, self-sustained ecosystems catering to export markets. Moreover, the government is also providing incentives at each step, from setting up a plant and facilitating key resources at subsidised rates to incentivising running costs with the single goal of attracting investments and building export capacity.

Several state governments have swung into action and allocated dedicated areas for building toy cities and park clusters. Karnataka is creating India's first toy cluster in Koppal district, designed with the view of housing an inclusive ecosystem of ancillary suppliers and industrial and social infrastructure.

Thus, with the numerous government initiatives, growing awareness around traditional toys and a countrywide push for local handicrafts, New India's traditional toy industry is at the cusp of unprecedented growth. The industry is witnessing rapid transformation through a plethora of technological innovations and is likely to become a major contributor to the economy in the coming years. The growth of the traditional toy industry is truly a step towards the vision of a self-reliant New India!

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Role of Folk Media in Nation Building

Gajanand Palve, Karthik D and Ramesh N

Rural India is a treasure trove of folk art, theatre, music, dance, art and craft. Folk media are the arts which have been transmitting values, thoughts, norms, beliefs and experiences of people in a homogenous society through its various forms. This media can play an important role in nation building as it is depicting realistic culture of people. It is a term used to denote 'people's performances'.

India became independent in August, 1947 and immediately after Independence, there were several challenges in nation building in the country. The immediate challenge was to shape the nation and make it united through accommodation of existing diversity, and also eradication of poverty and unemployment. The country was also focused on ensuring the development and well-being of the entire society and not only of some sections. Its development journey after independence has seen significant milestones through reforms which has enabled the nation to achieve substantial progress in the context of rise in income levels, growth, literacy, life expectancy and a wide variety of other economic indicators.

But the current requirement for the country is to make our country "AatmaNirbhar Bharat", which translates our nation into 'Self-reliant India' or 'Self-sufficient India'. The term has been used by the Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi during the announcement of India's COVID–19 pandemic related economic package on 12 May, 2020. The vision is to make India "a bigger and more important part of the global economy", pursuing policies that are efficient, competitive and resilient; and being self-sustaining and self-generating. Subsequently, two more AatmaNirbhar Bharat packages were announced on 12th October and 12th November 2020, bringing the total economic stimulus to ₹ 29.87 lakh crore (US$ 420 billion). The phrase has been used by the government in relation to the 2021 Union Budget of India. Slogans initiated under AatmaNirbhar Bharat include 'vocal for local', 'local for global' and 'Make for world'.

Vocal for local

Not only should products be 'Made in India', but the promotion of those products

should take place so as to make those products competitive. During the Independence Day speech in 2020, Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi said that "The mindset of free India should be 'vocal for local'. We should appreciate our local products, if we don't do this then our products will not get the opportunity to do better and will not get encouraged." An extension of this slogan is 'local for global', that local products in India should have global appeal and reach. The slogan has also been extended to sectors such as the toy sector, "time to be vocal for local toys".

Make for the World

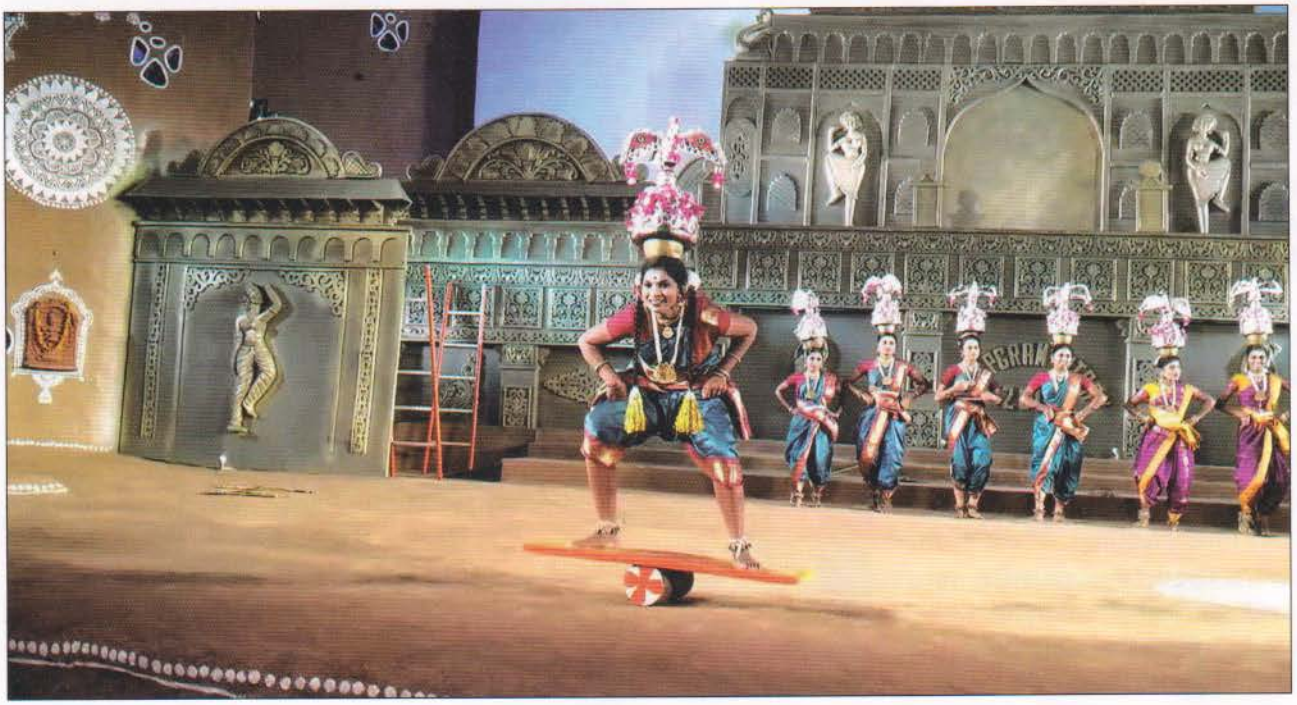
Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi, during the 2020 Independence speech, said that 'make for world' should go hand in hand with 'make in India' and that the slogan 'make for world' should be a key slogan like 'Make in India'. A variation of the slogan is "Make in India for the world".

There is need for promotion of this concept through a platform to make country "AatmaNirbhar Bharat" which would play a key role in nation building. Mass media has been playing a major role in nation building, but the main concern has been the reach of mass media. Which has been limited to urban areas, largely unable to trespass in the rural areas because of its orientation towards urban population. In this context, traditional folk media has the capability to reach large number of rural people as this media is embedded in the traditions of local community.

Role of Folk Media

Rural India is a treasure trove of folk art, theatre, music, dance, art and craft. Folk media are the arts which have been transmitting values, thoughts, norms, beliefs and experiences of people in a homogenous society through its various forms. This media can play an important role in nation building as it is depicting realistic culture of the people. It is a term used to denote 'people's performances'. This term refers to the performing arts which can be described as the cultural symbols of the people. Folk dance, rural drama and musical variety of the village people; all come under traditional media. Traditional folk media is not just confined to dance and music, but also includes art and crafts. Traditional folk media originated as a consequence of people's need to express themselves. These performing arts pulsate with life and slowly change through the flux of time.

In India, folk performance is a composite art. It is a total art created by the fusion of elements from music, dance, pantomime, versification, epic ballad recitation, religion and festival peasantry. It absorbs ceremonials, rituals, beliefs and of course the social system. Hence, it has been noticed as



a medium of developmental communication. Even in the era of advanced technology, the folk media have more propounded effect as we can use this media based on our flexibility of time, space and attract the audience wia adequate idioms, purposeful significance and entertainment component. The reach of folk media is higher as it breaks the language and literacy barriers, and adds curiosity in the listeners, which can change the attitude and perception of people.

The first significant international recognition of the traditional media in the communication and development strategies of the developing countries, came in the year 1972, when the international parenthood federation and UNESCO organised a series of meetings in London relating to integrated use of folk and traditional media in family planning communication programmes. The interest generated by this meeting, and the continued efforts to highlight the folk media as an effective form to convey developmental messages resulted in a number of seminars and workshops around the world. The folk media in India seems to be used as supplements to the mass media rather than at the centre of communication efforts to reach 70 percent of India's total population who live in villages. Traditional performing arts being functional, interpersonal and having a contextual base would be able to carry the message, of change, development and growth.

"Baul", "Kavigan", "Chhau" dance of Bengal, "Lavani" of Maharashtra, "Gee-Gee" of Karnataka, and "Villupattu" of Tamil Nadu, change their content and focus, depending on the contemporary needs, and were effective in arousing the conscience of the people against the colonial rule of the British. The traditional media were effective in many political and social campaigns launched by Mahatma Gandhi. Likewise, the eminent Tamil poet Sumbramania Bharati started using folk music to evoke patriotic feelings. Folk tunes were used to popularise songs and glories of spinning wheels and consequently boycotting British goods. Similarly, in 1940's India People Theatre Association successfully handled some of the popular regional theatre like "Jatra" of Bengal, "Bavai" of Gujarat, "Tamsa" of Maharastra, "Burkatha" of Andhra Pradesh, to increase social awareness and political education. Rapid transformation of mass media can be used as an effective blend along with folk media for bringing about effective participation of people in nation building activity. All these together can contribute immensely for making AatmaNirbhar Bharat a reality.

Prerequisites for Using Folk Media in Nation Building

- An understanding of the rural audience
- Careful consideration of its content
- Characterisation for their possible adaptation for development purposes
- Consistency with the needs of the social context
- Integration with the customs and beliefs of the local communities
- Provide rural people with entertainment in order to attract their attention and to ensure their participation in developmental activities
- Efforts should be made to preserve the originality of each folk form, and any adaptation, need not alter nor destroy the form
- For effective community-level communication strategies, the integrated and planned use of both folk and mass media is necessary
- Collaboration between the folk artistes and the media producers is absolutely essential

Strategies for Promoting Role of Folk Media for Nation Building

1. Identifying Interest, Needs and Attitude of Rural community

For the success of any developmental programme there is a need for identification of interests and requirements of rural community in different regions of country. This will result in proper understanding of grass root situation and will be helpful in drawing attention of people towards making country AatmaNirbhar. Assessment of various folk media channels in terms of preference and attitude towards these channels needs to be taken up so as to ensure the reach of message to the target community.

2. Planning

Planning is needed for implementation and success of any developmental programmes. Through proper planning, the gaps in communicating the message will be eliminated. Communication gap and time lag are major barrier in communication. A proper plan depicting who should do what, when, where, why, to whom and how; is needed to be developed for dissemination of messages, which would eliminate gaps in communication and persuade them to act accordingly.

3. Utilising the Social Structure of Village

In a rural situation there are change agents who act as a source for reinforcement of decisions. For example, we see farmers look for the advice of progressive farmers in village in the adoption of new technology. If the progressive farmers have adopted the new technology, subsequently other farmers in village readily take up the technology as these progressive farmers act as change agents. So in order to promote development of nation, there is need for understanding the rural situation, its social structure and potential change agents.

4. Integration of Folk Media, Mass Media and Social Media

Folk media persuades the individual through a face-to-face situation in the rural setting and convinces the large number of audience about the message through personal touch. Integration of folk media with mass media and social media channels would add a flavor which would create great value to the dissemination of message. The advantage of integration of folk media is to spread message to large number of masses in a short period of time. The added benefit is the credibility of folk media which makes communication productive for the audience. For example, Nutritional International-a YouTube channel, developed a video named *Namak Raja* for promoting Iodized salt in India. Such mass media material and social media channels may be developed for promoting AatmaNirbhar Bharat in the form of documentary films and printed material for broadcasting, telecasting in mass media channels and sharing of content in social media.

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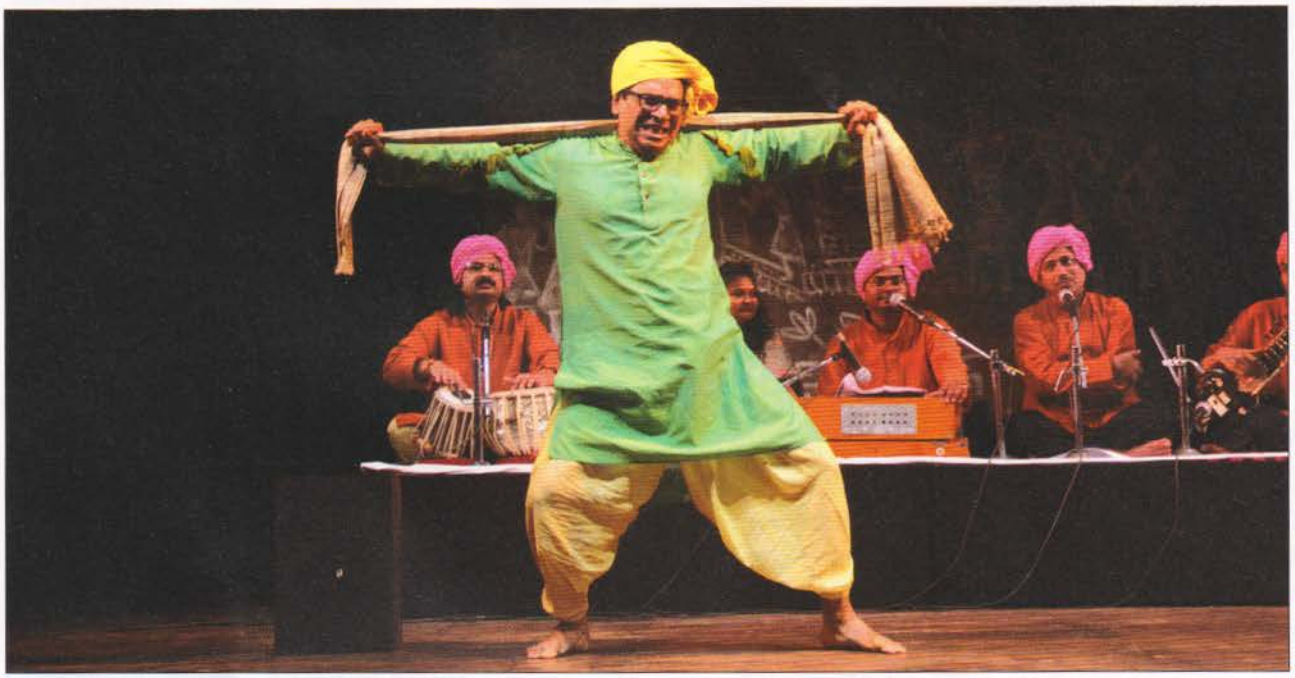
Preserving Performing Arts

Suman Kumar

India has a repository of performing arts. Performing arts are the repository of "Cultural Heritage", the intangible cultural heritage. Performing arts include traditions or living expressions inherited from our ancestors in the form of diverse performing arts like oral traditions, song, dance, and drama. Performing arts are needed to be safeguarded as it is a locally connected, community-based living practice.



Performing art is an art that is performed before the audience and is appreciated for its content, form, style, and the aesthetic approach. Music, dance, and drama are the forms of performing arts that are being traditionally performed on stage before the audience. Even before the emergence of language, the forms of the performing arts were the medium to convey the experience, feelings, and expressions of human beings. Through the performing arts, artists keep on sharing the knowledge acquired from the elders.

Performing arts are the repository of "Cultural Heritage", the intangible cultural heritage. Performing arts include traditions or living expressions inherited from our ancestors in the form of diverse performing arts like oral traditions, song, dance, and drama. Performing arts is a kind of intangible cultural heritage and is an important factor to showcase cultural diversity to the world.

In the 21st century, the content, form, and style of the performing arts are being changed as per the time. However, there is a need to maintain the basic traditions, philosophy, and the nuances of any performing arts. The performing arts should not only be treated as a tool of survival and source of earning. Human beings are adaptive creatures, so it is not correct that in the name of survival, many human expressions that are important from the perspective of humanity, community bonding, identity, and sense of pride will lose their relevance, if not practiced, not reinvented, not preserved.

Preservation is a way to sustain the best quality of live representations, without losing their originality, by documenting the inherited techniques of the stakeholders in the presentation of the performing arts. Performing arts has its deep connections with the oral traditions and expressions, verbal/non-verbal. Performing art explores human character and behaviour and the cultural ecology with social practices, rituals, and

festivities. It has concerns with the knowledge and practice of a community representative about nature and the universe. They sense the air, sky, creatures, and earth movements and symbols.

Performing arts makes a natural bonding between the generations by exploring the conflicting stories of human characters being told in the form of song, music, dance, and drama. The song and dance use repetition of words, tune, and rhythm which makes them easily memorised by people to explore their imagination to express them in composition using the mind, body, and voice of a human being. Performing arts practices to express not only the abstract feelings of a human being, but, it also uses traditional as well as innovative craftsmanship to communicate expressions powerfully.

Performing arts are needed to be safeguarded as it is a locally connected, community-based living practice and promotes cultural diversity and human creativity. Human being can be connected to their roots through the performing arts.

India has a repository of performing arts. Bharatanatyam, Kathakali, Kathak, Manipuri, Odissi, Kuchipudi, Sattariya, Mohiniyattam are recognised as classical dances of India. In music, we have Hindustani and Carnatic Classical music divisions. Traditional, ritual, regional, and folk music, dance, and drama are also very attractive experiences for tourists coming to India. They go to enjoy performing art practices like-Ras, Rasiya Geet, Nautanki, Birha, Sohar, Hori, Dhobiya Dance, Alha, Ramleela of Uttar Pradesh; Pankhida, Lotia, Ghoomer, Kalbelia, Swang, Phad, Langa and Mangniyar, Khyal, laavni of Rajasthan; Pandvani, Baans Geet, Loriki, Nacha of Chattisgarh/MP; Ramleela, Shakunakhar, Mangalgeet, Devgeet, Baramasa of Kumaon; Mando, Dasavatar, Theatre of Goa; Chhakri, Bhand Pather, Rouf Dance, Bachnagama, Bhakha of Jammu and Kashmir; Laman of Himachal Pradesh; Tappa, Bhand Mirasi, Jugni, Dhad Sarangi, Algojha, Heer, Bhangra, Gidda, Shabad Kirtan of Punjab, Sang/Swang ragini of Haryana; Powada, Laavni, Tamasha, Dasavatar, Jhadipatti of Maharashtra; Burrakatha of Andhra Pradesh; Bhuta Song, Kuttiyattam, Kathkali, Moiniattam, Mudiyattu, Chavittnatam of Kerala; Daskathiya, Prahalad Natak, Bharat Leela, Ramleela, Daskathia, Chhau of Odisha; Bihu, Sattariya, Gayan Bayan, Tokri Geet, Jikir Zari, Ojhapali, Dhulia Circus, Mobial Theatre, Devdhani, Bhavona of Assam; Li Haroba, Manipuri Ras, Sumang Leela, Pung Cholam, Dhol Cholam, Moirang Parva of Manipur, Saikuti Zai, Bamboo Dance of Mizoram, Basant Geet, Ghasiyari Geet of Garhwal; Salhes Naach, Chandaini, Vidapat, Bhikhari Thakur's Bidesia, Chaiti, Jat Jatin, baramasa, Poorvi, Hori, Jogida of Bihar; Villu Paatu, Ammanaivari of Tamil Nadu, Hojagiri of Tripura; Chhau of Jharkhand; Jhumur, Chand Biwir Pala Gaan, Baul, Chhau, Jatra of West Bengal, Bhavai, Garba, Dandiya of Gujarat are various popular expressions of India.

Many regional, traditional, contemporary, dramatic, musical, and dancing expressions in India are being performed to a common audience by the performing artists. The performances not only happen on stage but also in many other spaces, such as rooftops, gardens, halls, grounds, etc.

Artists of the performing arts are the ideal practitioners of democracy. In the space of performing arts, any form of discrimination is not allowed. The artists are born liberals and believe in peace and harmony because only peace provides an environment to flourish the art and creativity.

So, performing arts are a very important part of human culture as

- It makes the bondings of society creative and expressive.
- It provides a platform to express the feeling of individuals, communities and discuss it on a common platform to find an acceptable solution.
- It experiments with an idea in the social lab of performing arts to understand the human values in it.
- It tells a story/situation with emotion.
- Document the common understanding of human beings in the form of text, subtext, and live acts.
- The practice of performing arts keeps your body, voice, and mind full of positivity.
- It revisits ideas, thoughts and philosophy to solve/resolve the conflicts/problems of society locally or globally.
- It embodies the ecology, objects, elements, and impersonate characters to develop a mutual understanding for the better existence of human beings.

- It develops the skill of humans to control their body, voice, and mind to express an idea, a character, and emotion effectively.
- It develops an observer's eye among the practitioners to understand a character from their perspective.
- Performing arts can ensure that one become a good orator.
- Performing arts are social labs to carve human sensitivity towards all types of arts, earth, environment, and the universe.
- Performing art practitioners are able to solve the problems; they easily connect with people and masses and are trusted by the communities.
- Traditionally, performing arts were the open social schools that taught masses about the ideals of religion, self-pride, sense of community, and dignity.
- They make one a leader in the society.
- Performing artists rule on the mind of the spectators' so they are welcomed by the NGO sector for conducting awareness campaigns.
- As an artist you can achieve immortal success and a thousand followers.
- Many performing artists, popular on stage/ film/TV, are successful politicians as they know the art of oration and effective communication.
- The performing arts industry is very big in our country and supports thousands of craftsmen, technicians, actors, hall owners, etc. to sustain their livelihood.
- Performing arts develop a strong logical character with the human resources.

The performing arts create an intangible cultural experience that needs to be safeguarded, preserved, and recreated, and transmitted to the next generation as heritage. We must try to strengthen and reinforce the diverse and varied circumstances, tangible and intangible elements with evolution and interpretation.

We must explore the opportunity to showcase the practice of various performing arts to acknowledge the specific practices, representations, expressions, knowledge and skills, appropriate, associated instruments, objects, artifacts, and cultural spaces and forms. Developing the idea of a specific museum (Living Home) of live performing arts at the regional level is needed to preserve the various living practices in the different parts of India. These living homes of performing arts should be identified to develop inventories to encourage creativity in the community and individuals to originate effective expressions. We need scholars, researchers to identify and define the best practices of art. There is a need to be sensitive towards the practice and presence of performing arts in different parts of country to support the establishment of the living houses for performing artists.

The establishment of a performing arts council at the regional level will be helpful to take measures to ensure the substantial existence of the art form. It will also be helpful to understand what is there in the particular performance, who is doing the performance and why they are performing this? We must encourage the practice of the performing arts in the schools and institutions. Every school should host the regional, local cultural expressions in the form of performing arts in their campus with the involvement of the traditional artists and the stakeholders. It will help them to get a better status and sustainability.

Documentation is a good effort to preserve a tradition/practice. But, as

we are dealing with the living practice, the community members are needed to be involved and trained to document the practice with all its tangible and intangible elements. Community members can easily penetrate into the practices of performing arts as they are part of the community and the element is owed by part of their existence.

Ministry of Culture, Government of India with its regional, Zonal Cultural Centres, Sangeet Natak Akademi, National School of Drama, Centre for Cultural Resources and Training (CCRT), Kalakshetra and many state cultural bodies are giving grants to individuals and institutions for creation, research and organising festivals and celebrations of performing arts in India. It is suggested to establish Indian Cultural Services, to bring some best administrative minds of the country to enhance the status and practice of performing arts.

Everyday performing arts is creating new experiences on stage and much other alternative space of performance one may find it in magazines, newspapers, and AV channels. But it still remains not enough for a country like India which is a place of diverse cultural expressions, performing arts traditions.

For the further betterment and innovation in performing arts, there is a need to have more investments, cultural administrators, professional performing artists at district levels, museum cultural complexes, cultural library, cultural magazines, fellowships, and scholarships and, training opportunities. Low cost fully equipped auditoriums at the block level may support the artists in a big way. More opportunities for artists can be created so that they can perform for the rural spectators as well.

National, regional and local performing arts competitions, and creative workshops and productions may be felicitated by the government and local concerned bodies. National, regional and local channels/ addas to showcase, document, and disseminate the knowledge behind the practice of various performing arts can also be encouraged. Performing arts are the three-dimensional human idea in practice to keep the abstract creative urges and character transparent for the masses in a defined, disciplined space with the strength of content and the beauty of expression to keep the society in control of the body, voice, and mind to maintain peace and harmony in the locality and on the globe for a future generation living happily in harmony with nature and universe.

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